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ABSTRACT

Aided by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), Metropolitan State University (Minnesota) developed 18 credit carrying theory seminars and added them to the regular curriculum. These seminars were offered beginning mid-April 1985, and continue to be offered. They add theoretical learning to the students' practical knowledge. The project was designed to educate experienced adult students by providing formal learning strategies that build directly on the experientially gained knowledge while adding to it and integrating it with the more theoretical knowledge typical of college-level learning. Information is provided on the project background and origins, project description, evaluation, publicity, and results. Project results include the addition of a series of theory seminars to the school's curriculum; the development of a model format for theory seminars; the creation of a handbook with detailed information on training faculty to develop and teach theory seminars; and presentation of papers at national and international conferences. Theory seminars are found to work well at this college, although they are more difficult to develop than originally anticipated. The result of the developmental difficulties was that the preparation of theory seminars was a significant professional development experience for participating faculty. Appended are: insights for FIPSE; copies of publicity material; evaluation information; and a copy of the grant proposal. (SM)

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THEORY SEMINAR FINAL REPORT 1986

Grantee Organization:

Metropolitan State University
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St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Grant No.:

G008 440425

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Ending Date: June 30, 1986
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Fund Program Officer(s):

Joanne Grason

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Summary	1
Executive Summary	2
Final Report	
Project Overview	5
Purpose	5
Backgrounds and Origins	5
Project Description	6
Evaluation	6
Publicity	8
Project Results	10
Summary and Conclusions	16
Appendix A - Insights for FIPSE	
Appendix B - Publicity	
Appendix C - Evaluation	
Appendix D - Grant Proposal	

Summary

Aided by a grant from FIPSE, Metropolitan State University developed 18 credit carrying theory seminars and added them to the regular curriculum. Theory Seminars are a new university level learning strategy designed specifically for adult students who have gained considerable knowledge through work, community, family and personal experiences. The seminars are subject specific (marketing, music theory) and have been developed in all areas of the university (business administration, human services, communications, arts and sciences, and nursing). Students with a specific level of knowledge meet together in seminars (6 to 15 contact hours) in which faculty cover the information and methodology needed for college level learning in their subjects which is frequently lacking from experiencial learning.

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Further information is included in a Theory Seminar Handbook available for purchase from:

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Executive Summary

Theory Seminars
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Project Overview

Theory seminars were offered at Metropolitan State University beginning mid-April, 1985, and continue tp be offered. Designed for adult students who have extensive practical experience, they add theoretical learning to students' practical knowledge, helping them identify and integrate the relationships between theory and practice, thereby enabling them to gain college credit for experientially based learning.

Purpose

The purpose of the project is to better educate experienced adult students by providing formal learning strategies (theory seminars) that build directly on the experientially gained knowledge while adding to it and integrating with it the more theoretical knowledge typical of college-level learning.

Background and Origins

Faculty have had a difficult time adequately serving adult students with extensive experientially based learning within the constraints of the three major learning options--courses, independent studies, and assessment of experiential learning. Courses virtually ignore student's experiential knowledge. Textbooks, even advanced textbooks, are usually written for students with book learning rather than work or community learning. Independent studies overcome the problem of repeating material already known, but they still have the problem of using material written and organized for students with little or no practical experience. Although assessment of experiential learning recognizes what students have learned in the community and at work and ensures that students do not repeat familiar material, faculty often find it difficult to equate students' previous knowledge with traditional academic standards for learing.

To ensure quality, adult students are often forced to either spend time in the classroom re-learning what they already know or miss the opportunity to build prior knowledge which may be integral to their educational goals.

Project Results

1. Three series of six month long training sessions in which faculty developed materials for theory seminars in their subject area were held.

2. All theory seminar materials were reviewed by internal and external educators.

3. Eighteen theory seminars have been incorporated into the regular curriculum.

4. All theory seminars have been offered at least once; most have been offered twice.

5. All theory seminars have been revised based on external reviews and the experiences of teaching them.

6. The following theory seminars are now part of Metropolitan State University's curriculum.

   Chemical Dependency
   Community Leadership
   Counseling
   Criminal Justice
   Literary Analysis
   Marketing
   Nursing-Leadership and Management
   Public Relations
   Religious Studies
   Studio Arts and Crafts
   Volunteerism
   Freshwater Fishing
   Investments
   Management
   Managerial Communication
   Music
   Parenting

7. Diagnostic tests were developed for each theory seminar to help advise students to take a course in the subject, a theory seminar, or an assessment of prior learning.

8. Theoretical components most often lacking from experientially gained knowledge were identified.

9. A model format for theory seminars was developed.

10. The amount of experiential learning included in students' university education substantially increased.

11. A regional conference was held co-sponsored by Metropolitan State University, The Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

12. A handbook was written giving detailed information on training faculty to develop and teach theory seminars.

13. Papers were given at national and international conferences and reprints in conference proceedings.

Summary and Conclusions

Theory seminars provide experienced adult students at Metropolitan State University with an educational format superior to that of courses, independent studies, or assessment of prior learning. Students with experientially gained learning now attend credit carrying theory seminars that directly build on their prior knowledge and integrate it into the more academic aspects of the subject which are normally part of college-level learning. University education becomes more meaningful for students when it is directly tied to their existing knowledge. Because students do not have to relearn material they already know, they spend less time in classrooms and, thus, less time gaining university credit. A greater part of students' university education includes experientially gained knowledge.

Because they have a direct input into students' learning, theory seminar instructors have greater control over the knowledge for which they award credit than they do in the assessment of prior learning. Because all participating students have knowledge and experience in the field, faculty can use more sophisticated teaching and evaluation methods in theory seminars than they can in most courses and independent studies. Finally, because of the shortened contact hours, faculty can keep classes small, allowing for greater individualization of instruction and greater classroom interaction.

Theory seminars work well at Metro State. Both faculty and students are enthusiastic about them. However, they are much more difficult to develop than originally anticipated. Faculty have little experience in developing diagnostic tests which are easy for students to take and yet give sound advice. Faculty have little experience in integrating college-level learning with students' practically gained knowledge or in directly integrating that knowledge with the methodology of the field and with the more theoretical aspects of the subject. Many faculty found it difficult to move away from the concept of directly covering all knowledge to an approach which allowed them to identify and build on students' prior knowledge and to allow for extensive student independent work during the seminar. However, because of these developmental difficulties, faculty were forced to think through basic educational questions and to look at their subjects from a different educational point of view. The result was that the development of theory seminars was a significant professional development experience for participating faculty.

THEORY SEMINAR FINAL REPORT 1986

Project Overview

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The purpose of the project is to better educate experienced adult students by providing formal learning strategies (theory seminars) that build directly on experientially gained knowledge while adding to it and integrating with it the more theoretical knowledge typical of college-level learning.

Background and Origins

Metro State faculty had a difficult time adequately serving adult students with extensive experientially based learning within the constraints of the three major learning options--courses, independent studies, and assessment of experiential learning. The problems confronting Metro State are replicated at all institutions educating experienced adults.

- Courses virtually ignore student's experiential knowledge. Textbooks, even advanced textbooks, are usually written for student with book learning rather than work or community learning. Further, experienced adults often take courses with students who do not have practical experience and have little interest in the learning derived from it.

- Independent studies overcome the problem of repeating material already known, but they still have the problem of using material written and organized for students with little or no practical experience. Further, they do not provide for the exchange of ideas and challenges between students and between students and faculty which is at the heart of good education.

- Although assessment of experiential learning recognizes what students have learned in the community and at work and ensures that students do not repeat familiar material, faculty often find it difficult to equate students' previous knowledge with traditional academic standards for learning. Further, although experiential learning can result in practical knowledge that is as broad as knowledge gained in university or college courses, such learning often lacks a strong theoretical base.

To ensure quality, adult students are often forced to either spend time in the classroom re-learning what they already know or miss the opportunity to build upon prior knowledge which may be integral to their educational goals. Furthermore, they receive little help in relating new learning to experiential learning or in resolving conflict between knowledge gained in the non-academic world and that gained through books.

The problem addressed by this grant was that of providing education which meets the needs of adult students while continuing to ensure the high quality of education at a college or university. As Metro State's standards have become more explicit and procedures for evaluating experiential learning have become more stringent, there has been a decrease in the amount of college credit based on experiential learning claimed by students and an increase in traditional coursework.

Project Description

The process of developing theory seminars began with intensive faculty training. Metro State faculty from all five undergraduate academic areas - business, human services, arts and sciences, communications and nursing - attended a series of teaching seminars in which they were assisted in preparing curricular materials for their respective theory seminars. These included: theoretical components of their field; diagnostic tests and scoring guides directing students to take a theory seminar, enroll in a course or go directly to assessment of prior learning; detailed syllabi; and evaluation instruments. These faculty included both resident (full-time) and community (adjunct) faculty. As practitioners, community faculty have first-hand knowledge of the work and community experiences in which students participate, and the type and extent of learning they acquire through those experiences. Further, as educators, they are aware of the theoretical knowledge most often absent from work and community experiences.

Once curricular materials for the respective theory seminars were completed, they were sent for critique to a national advisory panel including traditional and non-traditional educators. Faculty offered their respective seminars a least once and sometimes twice during 1985 and 1986. Based on comments from advisory panelists and experience teaching the seminars, faculty revised one or more components of their seminars.

To extend awareness of the theory seminar process beyond Metro State, during the year the theory seminar program developed cooperative links with CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning), particularly for mutual support of a regional conference on innovation in higher education held in May, 1986.

Evaluation

In order to evaluate the theory seminar project, the following activities were carried out.

All materials used in faculty training and all seminar curriculum material were formally reviewed and critiqued by center coordinators at Metro State.

All curriculum materials (diagnostic test and scoring quide, syllabus and evaluation instruments) for theory seminars developed under this grant were reviewed by one or more members of a national advisory panel and, in several instances, by professional colleagues in the specific field. A summary of their comments is attached (See Appendix B).

After the seminars were held once, faculty met to discuss the seminars and possible changes in light of their experiences working with students and the comments by the advisory panel reviewers.

At the end of each theory seminar students completed evaluation questionnaires which focused on:

- o students' perception of the appropriateness of the subject matter for the theory seminar format and the quality of their learning;
- o strengths and weaknesses of the seminar compared to the traditional classroom course;
- o judgement of the time involved in theory seminars as opposed to regular courses;
- o improvements which might be made.

A summary of students' rating of theory seminars is attached. (See Appendix C.)

The project coordinator, in conjunction with the respective teaching faculty, followed up with questionnaires and contacts to those students who took diagnostic tests, but failed to register, to determine the effectiveness and validity of diagnostic tests as a screening device. (A summary of responses in included in Appendix C.)

The project coordinator, in conjuction with the respective teaching faculty, did follow-up questionnaires and contacts with students who failed to complete the seminars successfully to identify reasons for non-completion and, if necessary, make appropriate adjustments in seminar design.

Metro State faculty, including persons who had and had not participated in the theory seminar training program, and representatives to the national advisory panel of educators critiqued the handbook developed for use at the theory seminar conference and for dissemination of information about the theory seminar program nationally.

Data about students participating in the seminars has been collected to draw conclusions about the relative rate of participation in theory seminars and impact of theory seminars on students' enrollment in assessment of prior learning at Metro State. (See Appendix C.)

Publicity

Theory seminar information was disseminated in a number of ways including the following.

- Course descriptions that detail audience, content and methods of specific theory seminars.
- Flyers and posters that summarize the theory seminar process and specific seminars for the quarter distributed through information racks, student orientation packets, informational displays, recruitment and information meetings
- Periodic articles in the "Catalyst," the Metro State newspaper, and in the nursing students' newsletter amplifying information about upcoming theory seminars.
- Article by Leah Harvey on theory seminars in March, 1986, CAEL newsletter.
- Presentation by Leah Harvey, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, June, 1986.
- Paper by Anne Webb, 5th International Conference on New Concepts of Higher Education, International Council of Universities Without Walls, Santa Monica, June, 1986.
- Conference presentation by Professor Susan T. Rydell, Metropolitan State University, A New Approach to Experiential Learning: Theory Seminars, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning National Assembly, Boston, December, 1985.
- Presentation by Susan T. Rydell, application of Theory Seminar Concept to Prison Settings. Meeting of Minnesota Prison Consortium, St. Paul, September, 1985.
- Informational meetings with faculty and staff, (2 with advising, 1 with admissions, 2 with resident faculty, 4 with Individualized Educational Planning (IEP) instructors) to orient them to the theory seminar process. IEP instructors were particularly important because they are in essence the gatekeepers of students' degree plans; if they are well-informed about theory seminars and in turn direct students appropriately to them, students are much more likely to be aware of and use this learning opportunity.
- Personal meetings with staff in Minority Services, Admissions, Advising, and Metro State's prison outreach program to identify ways in which theory seminar programs might be useful to student groups.
- Packets including descriptions of the theory seminar process and specific seminars, as well as selected diagnostic tests for

faculty to use when working with students who might be appropriate candidates for theory seminars.

- Packets including a summary of the theory seminar process, flyers and conference brochures to external audiences such as CAEL members, interested faculty from other universities, and community-based education coordinators in area community colleges.

Project Results

This section includes progress related to each of the objectives included in the original grant proposal. The proposal is in Appendix D.

Goal: Train 15 faculty in teaching seminars to develop and teach theory seminars for adult students with experiential learning in their field.

Results: Fourteen faculty participated in the first series of training seminars held winter through early fall, 1985; an additional 7 were trained in fall, 1985 to spring, 1986. In these training seminars faculty identified theoretical components common to most or all disciplines; developed diagnostic testing materials and procedures and pilot tested diagnostic tests with students; discussed uses, strengths and weaknesses of alternative learning strategies such as simulation, role playing, field projects and integrated innovative teaching strategies into syllabi; and devised comprehensive assessment techniques that measured both experiential and theoretical learning.

Faculty completing the teaching seminar process: (C: community, R: resident)

Chemical Dependency: Anita Makar (C)
Community Leadership: Thomas O'Connell (R)
Counseling: Robert Peterson (C)
Criminal Justice: Oren Steinfeldt (C)
Literary Analysis: Carol Holmberg (R)
Marketing: Steven Bergerson (R)
Nursing-Leadership and Management: Mary Brekke (R)
Public Relations: David Farkell (C)
Religious Studies: Larry Crockett (C)
Studio Arts and Crafts: Georgiana Kettler (C)
Volunteerism: Mary Wiser and Rich Wheaton (C)
Freshwater Fishing: Chet Meyers (R)
Investments: Robert Hanle (C)
Management: Earl Bolick (C)
Managerial Communication: Martha Hardesty (C)
Music: David Means (R)
Parenting: Sally Dierks (C)

In addition, another community faculty member Dorothy Dodge received a stipend to develop a diagnostic test for her previously developed theory and assessment workshop in political effectiveness.

Goal: Schedule 10 theory seminars the first year and five the second year as part of the regular Metro State curriculum.

Results: Eighteen theory seminars have been incorporated into the Metro State curriculum, each is offered one or two times each year.

Goal: Identify a panel of educators representing traditional and non-traditional higher education institutions both from the area and throughout the nation to evaluate project materials and the theory seminar handbook as they are developed.

Results: The following panel was contacted and provided valuable and instructive evaluations for curriculum materials and the theory seminar handbook.

George Ayers, President, Chicago State University, Illinois.
George Bates, Dean of the College, Plymouth State College, Plymouth, New Hampshire.
Arthur Chickering, Director, Center of Higher Education, Memphis State University, Tennessee.
Shirley Clark, Professor of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Minnesota.
Dee Halberg, Continuing Studies Department, St. Cloud State University, Minnesota
Paul Jacobs, Director of Testing, Thomas A. Edison State College, Trenton, New Jersey.
Thomas Little, CAEL Regional Office, Richmond, Virginia.
Terry MacTaggart, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Minnesota State University Board, Minnesota.
Martin Thorsland, Director of Program Review and Assessment, Empire State College, Saratoa Springs, New York.
Julie Bell White, Chair, Speech/Communications Dept., College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota.
Allen Wutzdorff, Chair, Experiential Learning Council and Professor of Psychology, Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Goal: Resident faculty will review the syllabi and materials developed for each of the seminars. They will work with seminar instructors until the materials reflect high quality, upper division, university level instruction.

Results: Project directors reviewed all theory seminar curriculum materials and worked with seminar instructors until the materials met instruction and assessment standards of high quality, upper division, university level instruction. As materials went to advisory panelists for review, they were also sent to the appropriate Metro State faculty for their review and critique.

Goal: Seminars will be evaluated as they are offered and revised as appropriate.

Results: At follow-up seminars for each group of faculty, instructors shared what happened when they taught their theory seminars for the first time, successes they experienced and changes they wanted to make. Colleagues and project directors offered feedback. Changes made included: revisions of diagnostic tests, lengthening classroom time, increasing or decreasing time between meetings, setting specific deadlines for completion of evaluation, changing theory seminar enrollment to meet instructional needs while maintaining seminar objectives (in subjects such as managerial communications or parenting, 18 to 20 was too large, in chemical dependency and management with extensive group work, fewer than six was too small.)

Goal: Revise and continue to offer successful seminars developed through the grant.

Results: All seminars developed under the grant are continuing to be offered, some with revisions.

Goal: Identify, through diagnostic testing, those areas in specific disciplines which are usually lacking in knowledge gained from life/work experiences.

Results: This was done through the diagnostic testing process. In marketing, for example, students were directed to choose readings from a list which covered those topics identified through the diagnostic test as areas of weakness or lack of knowledge.

Goal: Develop diagnostic testing processes which can be used in specific disciplines to direct students appropriately to courses, theory seminars or assessment of current knowledge.

Results: Through May, 1986 of the 347 students requesting diagnostic tests, 157 enrolled in theory seminars. Follow-up questionnaires were sent to those who requested diagnostic tests, but did not register. Among 37 respondents for the first three quarters in which theory seminars were held, 13 said the test was too difficult, 8 decided to enroll in a course instead, 5 decided to go directly to assessment of prior learning. In winter quarter, 1986, of 26 students responding 4 said the test was too difficult, 4 decided to enroll in a course, and 3 decided to have their prior learning assessed. See Appendix C for more detailed results of this follow-up survey.

Goal: Increased quantity and quality in the theoretical components of prior experiential learning included in students' degree program.

Results: While this is difficult to assess directly, progress toward this goal is evident from reviewing syllabi and from student response on the Instructional Improvement Questionnaires:

> "In my prior assessment, I did not learn anything--I presented what I had done."

"I basically had the work half done, a course would have been redundant."
"This required much more writing of papers. Benefits: personal gain and insight much greater with additional research.
"A very well structured way to document and identify learning."
"Gave the help and direction needed to focus one's experiential learning."

Goal: Develop theory seminar models appropriate for specific disciplines.

Results: A variety of theory seminar models were developed. In a subject such as religious studies, where the instructor knows students are coming in with similar knowledge of the basic text, the Bible, a one-day session worked well. For subject areas such as community leadership or chemical dependency, where students' experience and background were more diverse, sessions totaling 10 or more hours seemed necessary. In other areas as marketing and human services administration, where students worked on a group project or assignment, at least two sessions with sufficient working time in between was necessary. On the next page is a framework for a model theory seminar.

MODEL THEORY SEMINAR

I. Before Group Meeting

A. Diagnostic testing
B. Clarify student expectations
C. Assigned reading

II. Sessions one through three--faculty controlled

A. Introductions
To establish rapport for small group work

B. Context
1. history
2. assumptions/Values
3. content

C. Theories/Theorists

D. Ethics: possibly not explicit in every case

E. Student Assessment
Assessment of specific learning needed by each student
Individualized student assignments to be based on this

F. Learning strategies:

1. Traditional learning strategies for above include
a. readings prior to seminar
b. classroom
1. small group discussion
2. lecture
3. video
4. role play
5. self-analysis as in leadership style

2. Analysis and communication part of these traditional learning strategies

G. Students missing essential knowledge may have formal meetings with faculty following the above format

III. Informal Contract/Independent work--Student and faculty controlled

A. Individual or group projects determined by experience either to fill gaps in knowledge or to build on experience or both

B. Reading - individualized

C. Reading and project include analysis and communication

IV. Evaluation Session--Student controlled

A. Student Product

B. Student Critique

1. of other students' products
2. of a professional product (e.g., video)

C. Assessment of

1. knowledge of A, B, C, D in II above
2. communication ability
3. analysis

Goal: Increase numbers of Metro students registering for prior learning
Results: Registration for assessment of prior learning (including theory seminars) showed gains from 1985 to 1986. There was over a 50% increase in students registering for assessment of prior learning (including theory seminars) from FY85 to FY86. Registrations increased from 550 in FY85 to 869 in FY86.

Goal: From 1984 through 1986 at least 200 students will enroll in theory seminars.

Result: From Spring, 1985, when theory seminars were first offered, through Spring 1986, 157 students have enrolled in theory seminars; there will be over 200 when Summer and Fall 1986 enrollments are included.

Goal: Develop a handbook, for use at Metro State and other colleges and universities which outlines procedures for developing theory seminar, model curricula, and the pedagogical theories and methods of training faculty.

Results: A draft of the handbook, covering all sessions of the teaching seminar process and related materials and procedures for use in training faculty to develop and teach theory seminar was prepared, critiqued by internal Metro State faculty reviewer Steve Bergerson, Colleen Coghlan and Chester Meyers and external reviewers from the advisory panel, Shirley Clark, and used as a guide for the first theory seminar conference. The handbook is in the process of revision and will be nationally available this fall.

Goal: Disseminate information gained throughout the project internally to faculty, staff and students and externally interested educators and the larger community.

Results: Developed a variety of publicity that emphasized three key points:

1. Theory seminars are credit-generating learning opportunities.
2. To enroll in theory seminars, students must have significant experience in the field.
3. Before registering students must take the diagnostic pretest or contact the instructor to determine if their experience offers them sufficient background.

The materials developed are in Appendix B.

Goal: Organize a regional conference focusing on the theory seminar process.

Results: A conference, sponsored by Metropolitan State, FIPSE and CAEL, held May 1-2, 1986, at Springhill Conference Center, Wayzata, informed participants about the theory seminar process and gave them hands-on experience developing theory seminar materials they can use in their respective institutions. (See Appendix B for conference materials, including program and list of participants).

Goal: Create more opportunities for adult students at Metro State and other colleges and universities to gain recognition for experience-based learning in a time and cost-effective manner.

Result: Students without sufficient prior learning will be able to use their previous learning plus new learning in theory seminars to gain college credit. Faculty are more likely to be willing to assess experiential learning because in theory seminars faculty have control over the outcomes of the student learning.

Goal: Continue faculty development in designing and teaching theory seminars, adding new theory seminars to meet students' demand in appropriate areas.

Results: Continue teaching seminars in 1986-87 in subject areas such as Sport in American Culture and Volunteer Personnel Management.

Summary and Conclusions

Theory seminars provide experienced adult students at Metropolitan State University with an educational format superior to that of courses, independent studies, or assessment of prior learning. Students with experientially gained learning now attend credit carrying theory seminars that directly build on their prior knowledge and integrate it into the more academic aspects of the subject which are normally part of college-level learning. University education becomes more meaningful for students when it is directly tied to their existing knowledge. Because students do not have to relearn material they already know, they spend less time in classrooms and, thus, less time gaining university credit. A greater part of students' university education includes experientially gained knowledge.

Because they have a direct input into students' learning, theory seminar instructors have greater control over the knowledge for which they award credit than they do in the assessment of prior learning. Because all participating students have knowledge and experience in the field, faculty can use more sophisticated teaching and evaluation methods in theory seminars than they can in most courses and independent studies. Finally, because of the shortened contact hours, faculty can keep class

size small thereby allowing for greater individualization of instruction and greater classroom interaction.

Theory seminars work well at Metro State. Both faculty and students are enthusiastic about them. However, they are more difficult to develop than originally anticipated. Faculty have little experience in developing diagnostic tests which are easy for students to take and yet give sound advice. Faculty have little experience in building college-level learning on students' practically gained knowledge or in directly integrating that knowledge with the methodology of the field and with the more theoretical aspects of the subject. Many faculty found it difficult to move away from the concept of directly covering all knowledge to one which allowed them to identify and build on students' prior knowledge and to allow for extensive student independent work during the seminar. However, because of these developmental difficulties, faculty were forced to think through basic educational questions and to look at their subjects from a different educational point of view. The result was that the development of theory seminars was a significant professional development experience for participating faculty.

Appendix A

INSIGNTS FOR FIPSE

The most helpful form of assistance was the funding for release time for the project directors and for faculty to develop theory seminars. Theory Seminars have been very successful at Metro State, but they are difficult for faculty to develop. Without the financial support from FIPSE, it would not have been possible to develop them. The educational problems encountered were such that they were only solved through collective efforts.

The second most helpful assistance was the financial support for project directors to attend national and international conferences. The interaction with peers in education was invaluable in the refinement of the concepts of the project.

FIPSE strongly encouraged us to produce a Handbook for dissemination purposes. We are not sure this was an effective use of time. Writing the Handbook took an enormous effort on the part of the Project Directors. It remains to be seen if its dissemination is comparable to the effort it took to produce it.

FIPSE should continue to fund projects which will improve education for adult students. Adult students are the fastest growing segment of the student population. However, very little education has been developed specifically for them. The key considerations--how adults learn best, education that benefits adults the most, difference between adult and younger learners--are seldom addressed through indepth studies. Finally, in making awards, FIPSE should be aware of and actively encourage the professional development aspects of the project. The result of faculty attending teaching seminars to develop theory seminars and project directors attanding conferences was professional development for the participants. At a time of shrinking professional development opportunities.

Appendix B

PUBLICITY

The challenge of experiential learning

by Leah Harvey

Metropolitan State University was established in 1971 to serve the unmet needs of adult students in the twin cities metropolitan area. One of the important consequences of the University's mission is that although we offer a full range of traditional classes, we have a strong commitment to recognizing experiential learning that adults bring with them to the University. Like most institutions recognizing experiential learning, Metro U has seen many changes both in the process used to assess competences and in the kinds of competences submitted for university recognition by students. As our standards improved and our criteria for prior learning became more refined, we could proudly claim that we no longer recognized prior competences in questionable areas, but then, we recognized few prior competences in anything. Our standards had evolved to the extent that very little of the knowledge students brought with them to the university met our criteria for upper division university level learning. A resulting decrease in priors, then, rather than the issue of quality, became our major concern. We faced a new challenge: how could the university balance the importance of being competence-based and recognizing adults' experiential learning with a commitment to standards of academic quality?

This challenge arose, in part, because of the nature of our traditional courses and independent studies and of the prior competence assessment process. Our courses and independent studies are limited in that they virtually ignore the learning experienced adult students bring with them into the classroom. The textbooks for most classes and independent studies are geared toward younger students with little practical experience. Furthermore, even at Metro U, where most of the students are adults, experienced students find that courses designed for students new to a field are often repetitive and uninteresting.

The assessment process alone, on the other hand, not only raises concerns about quality, but it is often threatening to students who have been long absent from college and have little knowledge of what is expected for university level recognition. Students are often reluctant to have their competence judged by university "experts" using criteria with which the students are not familiar. Furthermore, the assessment process lacks the intellectual stimulation of a classroom in which experienced adults learn from each other. Clearly, we need another alternative.

A Solution to the Challenge

At Metropolitan State University, we devised a seemingly logical solution to this dilemma; we created learning opportunities which combined the advantages of sponsored learning and the assessment process--"theory seminars." These were shortened courses (six to 15 contact hours) designed to cover the theoretical knowledge often lacking in experiential learning. After developing and conducting theory seminars in the areas of political efficacy, supervision, and literary analysis, we realized that although the concept may have been simple, it's implementation was not.

Students attending the theory seminars came with varying degrees of knowledge and experience and varying expectations and instructors were not clear about what they expected.

We applied to the Fund for Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) for funding to further refine the concept and work with a group of faculty to develop model theory seminars. These seminars have four important attributes:

1. Instructors cover the material most frequently absent from experiential learning.
2. Teaching builds upon students' experiences, using experiences as a starting point and making them integral to further learning.
3. Students learn to analyze and compare theories and the relationships of those theories to real life experiences.
4. Students learn to better access resources in the field enabling them to further their individualized studies.

Theory seminars are part of a three step process:

1. Self-scoring diagnostic tests are used to appropriately refer students with sufficient theoretical and practical knowledge directly to the assessment process; students with practical knowledge, without a theoretical base to theory seminars, and students with minimal knowledge to courses.
2. Students attend a theory seminar which combines independent study with classroom interaction.
3. Appropriate assessment techniques are used to evaluate each student's competence. (Students with extensive knowledge in a field might skip the second step.)

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Developing Theory Seminars

Upon receiving funding from FIPSE, a small group of Metro U faculty began to develop theory seminars in their subject areas. The subjects included: criminal justice, human services administration, studio arts and crafts, religious studies, counseling, literary analysis, marketing, community leadership, public relations, chemical dependency counseling, and volunteerism. This group of faculty met once a month and worked together to develop diagnostic tests, theory seminar syllabi and assessment instruments in their fields. They critiqued each other's work and shared their ideas and approaches to teaching theory seminars. This sharing was especially important, since they were developing a new teaching format; it very quickly became clear that, because they relied heavily on students' prior learning, theory seminars could not be developed as short courses.

Theory Seminar Content

One of the most difficult steps in the development process was defining the content of the theory seminars. This presented a challenge for two reasons. First, instructors do not often clearly define what it is they expect students to know in their fields. Second, instructors had to go beyond that definition to identify those components in their fields which students were likely to know from prior experiences. As discussion progressed, the term "theory seminars" became a misnomer. Instructors were developing seminars that covered "everything that is not usually gained through experiential learning." Nonetheless, in the interest of being able to talk about theory seminar content, we continue to refer to "theoretical components." The knowledge faculty expected the students to bring with them varied depending upon the subject. For example, students in literary analysis would have knowledge of the content of some literary genre; those in counseling would know "how to" counsel. In both cases, they might not be familiar with specific theories or the language of the subject. We found that in most cases, though, the students came with knowledge of either the practices in the field (e.g. studio arts, public relations) or of the content in the field (e.g. religious studies) and with weaknesses, to greater or lesser degrees in the following areas:

- Theories, theorists, and models
- Methodology: critical analysis, scientific inquiry, use of evidence
- Knowledge of assumptions, values, frames of reference, points of view
- Ethical or legal considerations
- Aesthetics and style

This list provided a framework for the rest of the planning process--developing tests, seminar syllabi, and assessment techniques.

Diagnostic Tests.

After identifying the theoretical components of a given field, faculty began developing diagnostic tests which would both:

1) Screen out students who were not ready for the theory seminars, and

2) Identify students who would be able to move directly into the prior competence assessment process.

Most diagnostic tests were designed to be self-scoring so that students could determine for themselves which course of action would be best. This saved faculty time and was less threatening for students than were tests scored by instructors. Faculty were not overly concerned about students inappropriately attending theory seminars since they would be hurting only themselves. In fact, we found the reverse. After being sent the diagnostic tests, many students decided against the theory seminars. In trying to steer students away from the prior assessment process, faculty often made the tests too difficult and pushed students to the other extreme, out of theory seminars and into courses.

Seminar Process.

Although the faculty and project directors had a vague concept of what "a theory seminar should look like," it wasn't until the fourth meeting of the faculty that they were able to outline a model theory seminar. After developing theory seminars in their fields and discussing different approaches, faculty found the following similarities.

1. Preparation

   a. Diagnostic Testing

Continued on page 17

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Excellence in Adult Learning

A Seminar in Experiential Learning: Adding Theory to Practice

May 1 and 2, 1986

at Springhill
Conference Center,
Wayzata, Minn.

Experiential learning often

- has little generalizability;
- lacks breadth;
- includes little theoretical knowledge;
- lacks credibility;
- is uneven; and
- presents an intimidating evaluation process.

Theory Seminars

offer an alternative. They

- base classroom learning on student experience;
- provide theoretical knowledge which complements experiential learning;
- give students new learning;
- provide for student-faculty interaction; and
- insure quality learning.

Sponsored by: Metropolitan State University, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL).

Theory seminars are not short courses nor independent studies. Instead, they are a new educational format specifically designed to build on adult students' experiential learning and to integrate that learning into the theoretical knowledge of the field. By adding the theory of university learning to the practical knowledge of the community and work world, theory seminars give students a rich and unique educational experience.

In this seminar participants learn how to develop theory seminars and to train other faculty and administrators to develop them.

Facilitators

- Dr. Leah S. Harvey, dean of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and Dr. Anne B. Webb, professor, conceived the theory seminars and served as directors for a two year project funded by FIPSE. Through this project 20 theory seminars were developed and implemented.

- Dr. Morris Keeton is the executive director and founding president of CAEL. He was previously chief academic officer of Antioch. Dr. Keeton has a Ph.D. in philosophy and is widely published in experiential learning.

- Dr. Shirley Clark is a professor of education, sociology and higher education, Department of Educational Policy and Administration, University of Minnesota. She holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in sociology.

Seminar format

Small groups will be led by faculty who have developed and taught theory seminars in the following areas: literature, music, studio arts, natural environment, religious studies, political science, counseling, human services administration, parenting, volunteer services, community leadership, chemical dependency, criminal justice, interpersonal communication, public relations, managerial communications, management, computer science, marketing and investment.

Metropolitan State University
An equal opportunity educator

Program

10:30 a.m.	Registration, coffee and rolls
11:30 a.m.	Welcome and introduction Lunch Keynote address by Dr. Morris Keeton
1 p.m.	Large and small group discussion of common theoretical components and diagnostic testing
5 p.m.	Free time
6 p.m.	Hospitality room cash bar
7 p.m.	Dinner
8 p.m.	Issues and Expectations
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 a.m.	Large and small group discussion of model syllabi for a variety of disciplines
12:30 p.m.	Lunch Informal remarks by Dr. Shirley Clark
1:30 p.m.	Large and small group discussion of evaluation techniques and instruments.
4 p.m.	Adjourn

Questions

If you have any questions, call Wendy Johnson, 612 296-4449.

Location

Springhill Conference Center, Wayzata, Minn., a comfortable, spacious retreat center with a casual atmosphere for intellectual discussion and exchange.

Transportation

Metropolitan State University will provide transportation to and from the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport. If you want specific directions to the Springhill Conference Center, call Wendy Johnson at 612 296-4449.

11/85

Registration deadline: April 17, 1986

Registration form — *A Seminar in Experiential Learning: Adding Theory to Practice*

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Discipline Area: _____

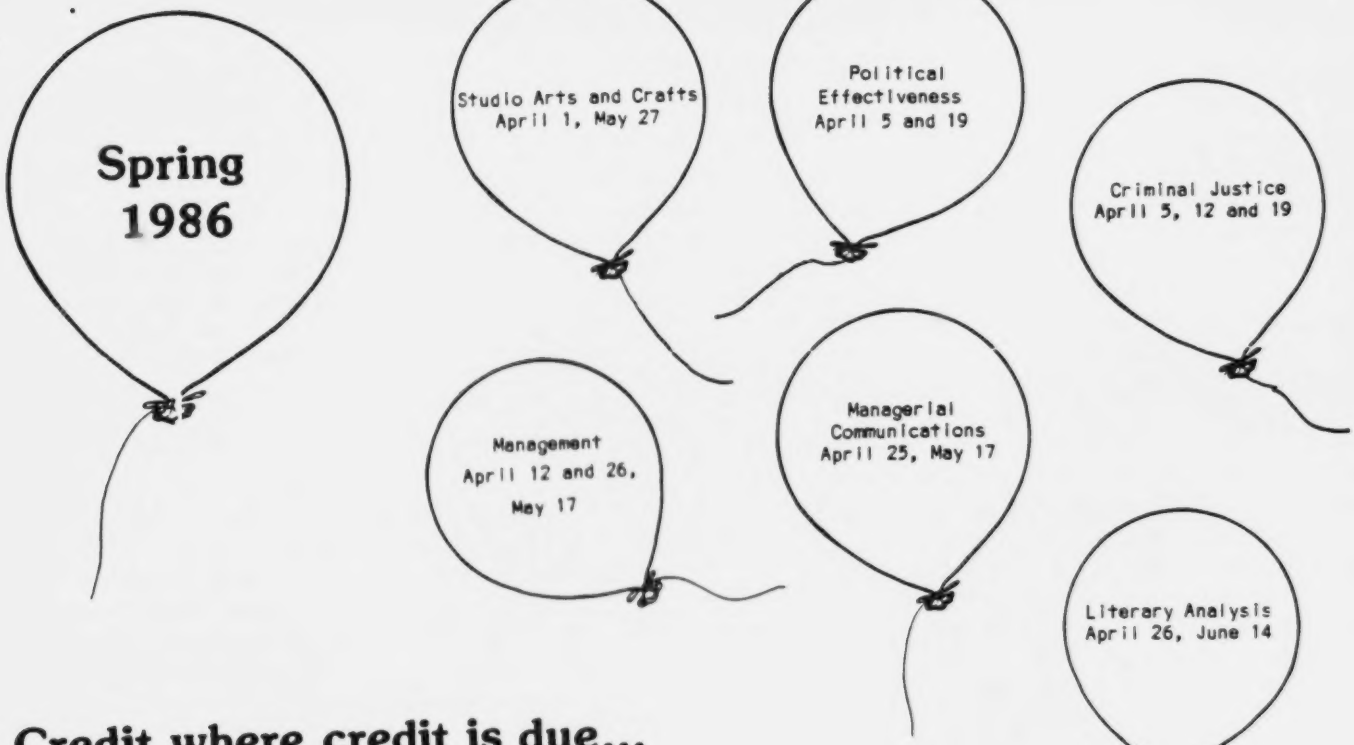
Position: _____ **Phone:** _____

Conference fee: $205 includes lunch and dinner on May 1 and lunch on May 2
$230 with overnight lodging (double occupancy)
$243 (single occupancy)

27-A

Approximate arrival time: _____

Send coupon with your check made payable to Metropolitan State University to Wendy Johnson, Curriculum Office, Metropolitan State University, Suite 121, Metro Square, 121 Seventh Place E., St. Paul, MN 55101-2189.



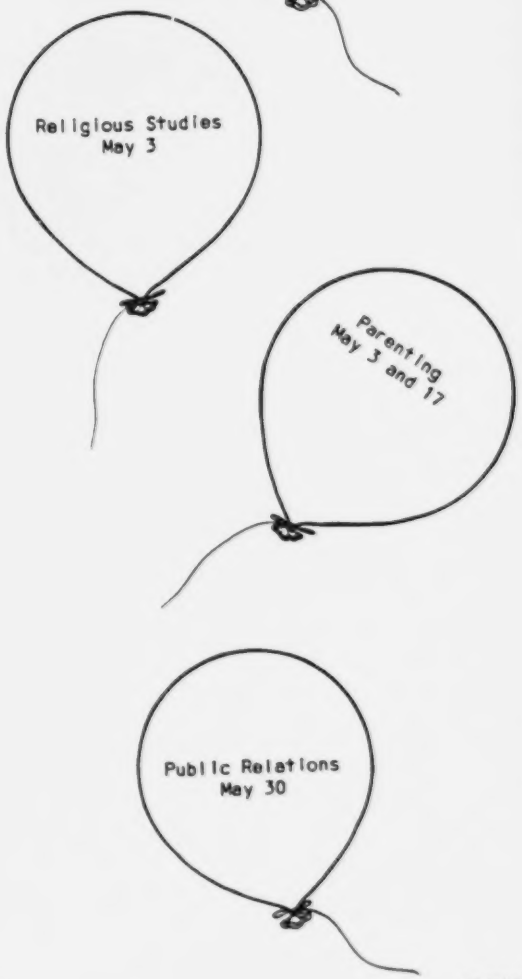
Credit where credit is due...

Do you have extensive life experience? Consider a Metro U Theory Seminar.

Throughout the year Metro U will be offering theory seminars in nearly two dozen subject areas; nine are scheduled for spring quarter. The seminars are designed to add to students' prior learning experience the expanded theoretical understanding of the field and help them claim college credit.

Diagnostic pretests, largely self-correcting, are available from the theory seminar office to help you decide if you should go directly to the assessment process, take a course in the subject or attend a theory seminar. Most faculty require that students take the diagnostic test or call them prior to registering. Most seminars also require reading and other assignments to be completed before the first session. Students may register up to ten days before the seminar without a late fee.

For more information about the theory seminars, or for a copy of a specific diagnostic test, call the theory seminar office, 296-8257, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Thursdays or Fridays.



Student Comments :

"Provided the theory cement to hold together the experience bricks I had."

"Crystalized my thoughts and ideas, made me think and make decisions you can generally pass off in class."

"I knew exactly what I had to do to earn the prior. It allowed me to complete the competence in a timely and structured manner."

"Expects a great deal of individual responsibility for learning--not a passive 'pour it in' kind of teaching."

"Gained greatest benefit from the experience of others."

"The 10-12 pages required for the paper made me do research I probably wouldn't have done; this was personally beneficial."

"Basically, I had the work half done. A course would have been redundant."

Chemical Dependency Counseling Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with experience in the chemical dependency field. This seminar examines various historical and social influences that have affected the treatment of chemically dependent persons to better understand the chemical dependency field today. This seminar addresses competence number two in the CD counseling program. Diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students are required to complete and mail this pretest to the instructor no later than one week prior to the seminar; they will be notified by the instructor of their status. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with the Chemical Dependency Counseling course.

Community Leadership Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to all students with experience in the field. Using their experience in community organizations, labor unions, political parties, public boards or commissions, or civil rights, human rights or women's organizations as a base, students review the theoretical aspects of leadership. Group discussion, lectures and reading help students explore assumptions about leadership, become acquainted with common leadership models, study democratic and empowering approaches to community leadership, and analyze their own qualities as leaders. Self-scoring diagnostic tests are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801, but are not required. Those who do not take the diagnostic test should contact the instructor prior to registering for the course.

Counseling Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is limited to people with volunteer or paid counseling experience. Students relate counseling theory and principles to their own experiences, through discussion, role playing and class presentations. Evaluation includes an objective test, written exercises, role-playing interview and paper. A self-scoring diagnostic test to assist students in deciding whether or not to take the seminar is available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the test before registering. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with Counseling and Interviewing Skills I.

Criminal Justice Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with experience in criminal justice. The seminar clarifies criminal justice terminology, examines legal and behaviorial aspects of crime, considers ethical implications of the field and applies the scientific method to criminal justice study. It also reviews various elements of criminal justice including police, courts and corrections, why they exist and how they operate. Students have a chance to apply these concepts to their individual experiences as police officers, or staff members of

correctional institutions, halfway houses or other criminal justice-related institutions. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, enroll in a course or proceed directly to assessment, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the diagnostic test and call the instructor before registering. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with the Criminal Justice Overview course.

Freshwater Fishing Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is designed for students who have a substantial degree of practical fishing experience on natural lakes, rivers and/or reservoirs. It is not designed for anglers with an interest in fly fishing or Great Lakes salmon fishing. The theoretical aspects of the seminar focus on biology and behavior of game and panfish, natural habitat, seasonal and daily weather and water conditions, and how these three elements determine fish location and suggest appropriate choice of tackle. Before registering for the seminar, students must successfully complete a diagnostic pre-test. The diagnostic test is available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with the Freshwater Fishing course.

Human Services Administration Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with experience in supervisory and administrative positions in human service organizations. Students review political and economic principles, and their relationship to human services administration at the national, inter- and intraorganizational levels. After an initial introduction, students collect and analyze information, summarize existing literature, and develop oral and written reports on selected topics such as decision making, centers of power, economic constraints and coalition building. Diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the test and call the instructor before registering. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with Health Care Management and Supervision I or Human Services Administration I.

Interpersonal Communications Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students who have studied interpersonal communication concepts and skills and have made a conscious effort to apply those concepts and skills to their communication settings and environment. The students' familiarity with interpersonal communications might result from developmental seminars in the business world, from a counseling setting or from pursuing a study of interpersonal communications on their own. This seminar focuses on theoretical perspectives of interpersonal communication including perception, verbal message construction, nonverbal message construction, language attributes, feedback, listening and conflict resolution. The seminar includes lectures, discussion, analysis of interpersonal communication and simulations. Students should complete the diagnostic test two weeks prior to attending the seminar. They will be notified by the instructor as to their status. It may not be included in a degree plan with the Interpersonal Communications course.

Investments Theory Seminar
This competence-generating theory seminar for experienced investors in the financial market, brokers or financial planners, or for those with a long interest in studying financial markets focuses on the theories and techniques of the financial market, specifically the relationship of interest rates, the equity market and federal policy. Students use this theory and their own experience to construct an effective investment plan to meet stated financial objectives. Students who have already earned college credit in this area must contact the instructor before registering. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with the Investments course.

Literary Analysis Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with experience in literary analysis of fiction and nonfiction materials including books, magazines, papers, memos and professional journals. The theory seminar helps students identify the important literary analysis theories, learn to apply critical thinking or identify how they already apply it, and prepare evidence of their theoretical and practical knowledge. Participants discuss assignments and issues related to critical reading, select a special project for assessment, and work in teams to critique one another's work. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the diagnostic test and call the instructor before registering. This theory seminar may overlap with other literature courses; students should contact instructor.

Management Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open only to students with experience in the managerial field; for example, students who have practical experience in management and leadership positions in industry, government, service, non-profit, self-owned sectors but lack formal training, theoretical foundations and analysis. This seminar provides the student an opportunity to apply their practical experience with management and leadership principles and practices. The requisities for the seminar are lectures, reading, written exercises, group work and objective tests for evaluation. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the diagnostic test and call the instructor before registering. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with Organizational Management and Behavior or Effective Supervision.

Managerial Communications Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students who have experience in interviewing, drafting written materials and giving oral presentations in their roles as managers of profit or nonprofit institutions or voluntary organizations. The seminar focuses on the theoretical perspective of communication as a dynamic process involving both verbal and nonverbal elements. Using their experiences in

directing others' behavior toward an institutional goal, participants respond to readings and lectures on organizational and motivational theory. The seminar examines ethics, gender and managerial style through small group discussion. A diagnostic test is available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students are required to complete and mail this pretest to the instructor no later than one week prior to the seminar; they will be notified by the instructor of their status. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with the Managerial Communications course.

Marketing Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is limited to students who have not received college credit for a marketing principles course, but who have marketing-related experience they wish to have evaluated. It reviews the principles and procedures of marketing and market planning, such as product development, market segmentation, promotional and distribution planning and pricing. It takes a practical, hands-on approach to the whys and hows of marketing a product, service or idea. Students relate marketing principles to their individual experiences in sales or sales management, advertising, media analysis or planning, promotion, public relations or market research. Students choose from suggested readings and work in teams to develop a marketing plan for an assigned case. Class presentations of the teams' market plans are videotaped and critiqued. Students also write a seven- to 10-page paper on a topic preferably related to their individual marketing experience. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the diagnostic test or call the instructor before registering. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with the Marketing Principles course.

Music Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with music performance experience from private or group study of an instrument or voice, singing or performing with amateur or semi-professional choirs or instrumental ensembles, or independent study of musical performance. The theory seminar helps students identify important theories of music sight-reading and harmonic analysis, learn to apply these theories and analytical methods to musical examples from popular and classical music styles, and prepare evidence of the theoretical and practical knowledge they possess. Participants discuss issues related to the notation and theoretical analysis of various musical styles, work in teams to drill and critique one another's work in developing sight-signing skills, and select a special musical analysis project to be completed for assessment. Students read some materials before beginning the seminar. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the diagnostic test and call the instructor before registering. This theory seminar may overlap with other music theory courses.

Nursing Leadership and Management Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is designed for students with managerial experience in nursing. It is intended to provide leadership and managerial theory to supplement previously-gained experiential learning. Students who successfully complete a diagnostic pre-test are eligible to register for this course in lieu of Nursing 5040. Prerequisite: Nursing 5000. To obtain a copy of the diagnostic test, call the Assessment Office, 296-2801.

Parenting Theory Seminar
This competence-generating theory seminar for parents, teachers, community volunteers and others who have worked extensively with children explores the theories of selected theorists who have contributed to the process of developing normal healthy children. The information concentrates on emotional health of the child as opposed to physical health. Lectures and discussion relate specific theories of Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, B.J. Skinner and others to specific examples of children's behavior and parental responses. A self-correcting diagnostic pretest to help students determine whether they should take this theory seminar is available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with Dynamics of the Parent-Child Relationship course.

Political Effectiveness Theory Seminar
This two-session, competence-generating seminar is open to students with experience in political parties, campaigns, or state and local government. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students should take this test before registering for the theory seminar.

Public Relations Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with experience in public relations. The seminar looks at the definition, history and ethics of public relations, evaluates their significance and relates them to students' experiences. These theoretical components are applied critically to a public relations four-step programming model. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, a course or a prior assessment, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must take the diagnostic test and score in the appropriate range to register. This theory seminar may not be included in a degree plan with the Public Relations Principles course.

Religious Studies Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with experience in religion. The seminar is based upon the student's involvement in religious organizations, study and reading, particularly of the Bible. Students look at the history and theoretical analysis of the Bible and compare the Judeo-Christian traditions to Eastern religions, among other topics. Students read some materials before the seminar and write a take-home essay to demonstrate their competence. Self-scoring diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801.

Students must take the diagnostic test or call the instructor before enrolling. This theory serminar may not be included in a degree plan with Introduction to Religious Studies.

Studio Arts and Crafts Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open only to students with experience in the field. Students who already have completed some work in a particular medium, but who lack formal training, theoretical foundations and analysis have an opportunity to study history, theories, ethics and other perspectives of studio arts. Students write papers and have their artistic work evaluated. An oral interview with the instructor, which helps students decide whether to take the seminar, is required; call instructor to arrange. This theory seminar may not be appropriate for students with coursework in studio arts or crafts; those students should contact the instructor prior to registration.

Volunteerism Theory Seminar
This competence-generating seminar is open to students with significant volunteer experience including positions of leadership and responsibility in church or community organizations. It centers on the impact volunteers have on nonprofit, governmental and for-profit organizations and the increasing professional quality of volunteers and volunteer management. The seminar covers essential principles and issues in the field including history, trends, theoretical concepts of values and motivations, and personnel management. Students relate their personal volunteer experiences to the broader concept of volunteerism in the class and in a final paper. Diagnostic tests, which help students decide whether to take the seminar, are available by calling the Assessment Office, 296-2801. Students must complete the test and return it to the instructor; the instructor conducts follow-up interviews to determine whether students are appropriate candidates for the seminar.

Artists, counselors, police officers, administrators or other adult students with extensive experiential learning in nearly two dozen subject areas have an exciting new educational opportunity at Metropolitan State University.

Theory seminars, designed to fortify theoretical foundations for successful assessment of prior learning, will help Metro U students claim the college credit they deserve for their experiential learning. The purpose of the seminars is to offer students the opportunity to include quality learning in their Metro U education without having to relearn material they already know.

Participation in theory seminars does not guarantee credit for prior learning. It does reinforce theoretical foundations for the assessment process in an approach that is less time consuming than taking a regular course. It also helps students identify and analyze the relationships between theory and practice.

The project is supported by a grant from the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. Directors of the project are Leah Harvey, Dean of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and Anne Webb, Professor. Community faculty member Carol Lacey is project coordinator.

The seminars are taught by Metro resident and community faculty representing all five undergraduate academic areas - business, human services, arts and sciences, communications and nursing. Faculty participated in six months of training to develop innovative and effective diagnostic and assessment materials, as well as teaching strategies that present significant theories and ideas of their fields in a compact, intensive format. All these materials are being reviewed by resident faculty and by an advisory panel of national educators representing both traditional and non-traditional education. Information about the experience of Metro U faculty and students participating in this project will be included in a handbook to be disseminated to the larger higher education community in 1986. Faculty teaching the theory seminars are drawn from areas in which students have acquired significant practical life/work experiences and in which students' knowledge gaps are evident.

Here is a list of participating faculty, listed with the topic and ideas of the types of students who might enroll:

Carol Holmberg/Literary Analysis:
Cartoonists, journalists, teachers, Great Books leaders, secretaries who synthesize articles for their supervisors, theologians and Bible study leaders, parents who read extensively for and about children, specialty readers who focus on such types as single authors, best sellers, self-help literature, essays, novels, etc.

Georgiana Kettler/Studio Arts and Crafts:
Students who have already completed some work in a particular medium, but lack formal training, theoretical foundations and analysis.

Larry Crockett/Religious Studies:
Persons actively involved in religious organizations, such as adult education programs, persons who have read extensively about religious issues.

David Farkell/Public Relations:
Reporters or other journalists who have written many stories. Persons from smaller businesses who have written news releases, planned events and written speeches for smaller businesses.

Tom O'Connell/Community Leadership:
Persons who have had at least one year of experience as active participants in community organizations, labor unions, political parties, public boards or commissions, civil rights, human rights and womens organizations, public interest groups, neighborhood associations, peace and solidarity groups,---or other associations attempting to influence public policy or solve community problems.

Oren Steinfeldt/Criminal Justice:
Police officers, staff of correctional institutions, counselors in community agencies such as halfway houses.

Rich Wheaton and Mary Wiser/Overview of Volunteerism:
Persons with extensive volunteer experience in a variety of community organizations. This is designed for someone who wants to get a competence who has had volunteer experience but who is not going into the volunteer field.

Steve Bergerson/Marketing:
People who have been involved with any of the many aspects of marketing, including sales or sales management, advertising, account management, copy writing, media analysis/planning, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and marketing research.

Roger Strand/Human Services Administration:
Persons who have had experience in supervisory/administrative positions in human service organizations/agencies and need to explore and document competencies in understanding theoretical concepts and their application to daily practice.

Mary Brekke/Leadership and Management in Nursing:
Nurses who have managerial experience at assistant head nurse level or above interested in attending a seminar providing leadership and managerial theory to supplement experiential learning.

Anita Makar/Chemical Dependency Counseling:
People who have been practitioners in chemical dependency field and have not had a lot of "formal training".

Bob Peterson/Counseling:
Volunteer or paid work experience counseling or interviewing people with little or no training in theoretical components.

Dorothy Dodge/Political Effectiveness:
Students with experience in political parties, campaigns, state and local government.

Sally Dierks/Parenting:
Parents, teachers, community volunteers and others who have worked extensively with children.

Martha Hardesty/Managerial Communications:
Managers in profit or non-profit institutions or voluntary organizations who have experience in interviewing, drafting written materials and giving oral presentations in their roles as managers.

Earl Bolick/Management:
Students with practical experience in management and leadership positions in industry, government, service, non-profit, self-owned sectors who lack formal training, theoretical foundations and analysis.

Bob Hanle/Investments:
Active investors in the financial markets, people with long interest studying financial markets, brokers, financial planners.

Bev Ferguson/Interpersonal Communication:
Counselors, human resource development people, training and development people, and others with extensive experience or training in interpersonal communication.

Chet Meyers/Freshwater Fishing:
Students with a substantial degree of practical fishing experience on natural lakes, rivers and/or reservoirs. (It is not designed for anglers with an interest in fly fishing or Great Lakes salmon fishing.)

David Means/Music:
Students who sing or play musical instruments individually or in groups, who can read music but who lack theoretical knowledge such as sight singing or musical analysis skills.

Diagnostic pretests are available to help students decide if this would be a useful option for them.

-- Students who do very well on this pretest might consider going directly to the assessment process.

-- Students who do poorly probably need to take a course in the subject.

-- Students who do moderately well may find that the theory seminar strengthens their experiential learning and prepares them for successful assessment of prior learning.

For more information about the theory seminars or for a copy of specific diagnostic tests or course syllabus, call the theory seminar office, 296-8257, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays. Beginning July 1, 1986 diagnostic tests will be available by calling the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment at 296-2801.

Appendix C

EVALUATION

THEORY SEMINAR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions to Student: The purpose of this questionnaire are: (1) to provide feedback from students to course instructors; and (2) to assist the academic centers in the evaluation of theory seminars. Your conscientious participation helps improve instruction at Metro U; however, your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and there are no penalties for not participating. Your responses are anonymous. We appreciate your cooperation in completing this for:

Theory Seminar _____ _____ Instructor _____ _____ Date _____

1. Using the following rating scale, indicate how the theory seminar incorporated your practical experience in the following areas:
(1) Very poor (2) Poor (3) Average (4) Good (5) Excellent

___Classroom lectures ___Class discussions
___Written and oral assignments ___Final evaluation

In a short answer, explain the most important way the theoretical content of the seminar supplemented your practical experience. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Rate how well the theory seminar included learning about the following:
(1) Very poor (2) Poor (3) Average (4) Good (5) Excellent

___History and trends
___Theory and theorists or models and structures
___Communication
___Ethics
___Critical inquiry or scientific method
___Assumptions, values, frame of reference or point of view of people in the field including the instructor

3. In a short answer, tell us how the theory seminar differed from a course (continue on next column)

_____

_____

_____

3. (continued) _____

_____

4. If you have had a prior competence assessment at Metro U, in a short answer, please tell us how the theory seminar differed from a prior assessment. Identify what you saw as its benefits and detriments. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. In a short answer, explain in what ways the theory seminar was "user friendly," that is, an educationally and psychologically hospitable format for you, as an experienced adult learner.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Did you have too much, enough, or too little practical experience to benefit from the theory seminar?

_____

_____

7. Did you have too much, enough, or too little theoretical knowledge to benefit from the theory seminar?

_____

_____

8A. Was the diagnostic test an effective instrument in helping you decide whether to attend a course, a theory seminar or a prior assessment?

_____

_____

8B. Indicate your performance on the diagnostic test:

_____ Within appropriate range for theory seminar

_____ Below range

_____ Above range

9. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the theory seminar?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. How would you rate the level of difficulty of this theory seminar?

____ Too Easy (1) ____Appropriate (2) ___Too difficult (3)

11. Would you recommend this instructor to other students? (Circle the number which best describes your response)

Definitely Not Definitely

1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

_____

12. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the instructor?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. How would you rate the overall performance of the instructor?

(1) Very poor (2) Poor (3) Average (4) Good (5) Excellent

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

14. Other Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SUMMARY OF STUDENT RESPONSES ON IIQ'S

IIQ's returned: Criminal Justice, Community Leadership, Volunteerism, Marketing, Counseling, Human Services Administration and Leadership and Management in Nursing.

(Summaries by seminar, not by number of students)

1. Using the following rating scale, indicate how the theory seminar incorporated your practical experience in the following areas:

(1) Very Poor (2) Poor (3) Average (4) Good (5) Excellent

Classroom lecture: 3.87 average summer, 4.23 fall
Range 2-5 summer, 4-5 fall
Written and oral assignments 4.09 average summer, 4.15 fall
Range 3-5 summer, 3-5 fall
Class Discussions 3.97 average summer, 4.08 fall
3-5 range summer, 3-5 range fall
Final Evaluation 3.89 average summer, 4.28 fall
3-5 range summer, 3-5 fall

Comments;
Interesting to compare theoretical components of area to way see the system working in my field.
Put some form to what I have been doing.
Class discussion provided means of comparison.
Theoretical content "scratched" surface and assignment made me dig deeper.
Basic reasons/historical development underpinning the "way" things are done.
Supplemented practical experience by forcing me to open a textbook.
Learned "hows" of management through experience, have not always learned the "whys"- this helped fill the gaps.
It had significant impact on my job. Our facility developed a new program from it.
Went into greater detail than I knew about the subjects previously.
Provided discussion on "whole picture" from other students' experience as well as instructor's.
It made me realize I was able to analyze on my own, without the continued guidance of an instructor.
Discussion of issues and interchange of ideas with other students was very helpful in developing new appreciation of other points of view.
It validated for me the idea that a practitioner in this field must be ethical and have a high degree of integrity.

2. Rate how well the theory seminar included learning about the following: (Including readings, classroom sessions, student projects).

History and trends 3.67 average summer, 4.23 fall
2-5 range summer, 3-5 fall
Communication 3.78 average summer, 4.2 fall
3-5 range summer, 3-5 fall
Critical inquiry or scientific method 3.69 average summer, 4.05 fall
2-5 range summer, 2-5 fall
Theories or theorists or models and structures 3.79 summer, 4.06 fall
1-5 range summer, 3-5 range fall
Ethics 3.75 average summer, 3.75 fall
1-5 range summer, 3-5 fall
Assumptions, values, frame of point of view of people (including instructor) 4.17 average summer, 4.58 fall
1-5 range 4-5 range

3. In a short answer how did the theory seminar differ from a course?
Basically, had course half done, course would have been redundant.
Abbreviated time More intense More indepth and relied more on prior knowledge and personal experience.
Better use of minimum time with maximum information.
Reintroduced material already well-known by participants with embellishments and new approaches.
With 13 years of work in system I knew how system operated but not history or theory; seminar more appropriate than course for me.
More preparation before first class.
Uses existing knowledge and skills within educational, practical format.
Concentrated work expectations were demanding, but "freeing."
Put more responsibility on students.
More personal and individualized. Great deal of independent reading, research and preparation.
Expedi~~ency~~ty: crystalized my thoughts and ideas, made me think and make decisions you can generally pass off in a class.
As much or more work with less class time.
Went into this with a lot of preknowledge--a "peg" to hang theories on; this gave frame of reference and springboard for new information.
Spent minimal time on "hows" and elaborated on "whys".
Student had complete choice either to do a good job or not. No instructor to give continued guidance, although instructor was available by phone.
Less structured environment allowed for a free expression of ideas, notiïnhibited by fixed guidelines on topics.
Seminar assumed prior knowledge and gave student direction to formulate experience in a theoretical framework.
Much more discussion on specific areas of the entire system.

4. If you have had a prior competence at Metro U, in a short answer, please tell us how the theory seminar differed from a prior assessment.

More knowledge and validation by giving me different terms to clarify my skills.

I have attended one other assessment workshop and found the theory to be similarly structured. However, this one required much more writing of papers. TS included additional outside time (papers and presentations). Benefits: personal gain and insight much greater with additional research.

Far more work, less apparent credit for prior experience.

In my prior assessment I did not learn anything--I presented what I had done.

A very well structured way to document and identify learning.

Gave the help and direction needed to focus one's experiential learning.

Wish more nursing competences were available this way. Most of the time I feel I am reviewing what I am already doing in my job.

Better one-on-one relationship with student and instructor because of amount of time together.

More structured and focused and also the instructor had a clear set of expectations. Prior evaluators do not.

I don't enjoy writing a 15-page paper for the final; I'd rather just get the competence with no additional work. But I learned a lot.

The prior competence assumed you already were ready to complete a test without any preparation; the theory seminar gave some background and preparation.

MUCH MORE WORK!! A good alternative when short on time and wanting to get on with it.

5. In a short answer, explain in what ways the theory seminar was "user friendly", that is, an educationally and psychologically hospitable format for you, as an experienced adult learner.

Adult interaction adds depth to learning.
Format allowed individualized flexibility. Allows student to complete a prior in a timely and structured manner. Great way to grow and learn and to polish skills and analyze them.
Please have more theory seminars.
Very pleased it was offered since it provided the guidance I needed to frame and legitimize my life experience.
Valuable supplement to my experience at a time when I most needed it because of lack of theoretical knowledge and problem-solving techniques.
Learning from other students of great help.
Concentrated theoretical and practical knowledge/made class put it in action.
I knew specifically what I had to do to earn the prior.
Expects a great deal of individual responsibility for learning--not a passive "pour it in" kind of teaching.
Format encouraged me to attempt other priors this way.
Excited to find areas in which I felt knowledeable and comfortable and those which were challenging to new learning.
Treated you as an experienced person in your field.
Gave us credit for previous learning and practical experience and workshops therefore eliminating frustrating time spend in a classroom when I would not really be learning new things.
It was a lot of fun, like a group of friends getting together for a visit.
The class was small which encouraged full participation. The instructor was very encouraging, supportive and open to conflicting ideas.
It was a nice alternative learning vehicle. Psychologically, it was a real downer because the amount of work weighed heavily on my mind for six weeks.
The instructor and other students were helpful to me in determining the worth of my experience; it was a good experience.
Helps expedite the prior assessment process.
Instructor's egalitarian approach lent itself to an absence of patronizing. Her observations were astute and supportive.
A good intermediate between new competencies and priors.

6. Did you have too much, enough, or too little practical experience to benefit from the theory seminar?
3/4 said they had enough 1/4 said they had too much
No one said they had too little practical experience.
All but one said they had enough, one said too much.

7. Did you have too much, enough or too little theoretical knowledge to benefit from the theory seminar?
Approximately 3/4 said they had enough 1/4 said they had too little (both summer and fall)

8A. Was the diagnostic test an effective instrument in helping you decide whether to attend a course, theory seminar or prior assessment?
85 percent said yes, 15 percent said no All fall quarter said yes
Comments:
Unfortunately I decided to enroll for the theory seminar late, therefore I took the diagnostic test only as an entrance requirement. By doing well on the test, I felt I made the right decision in choosing the theory seminar.
Much of the information on the diagnostic test didn't really determine past experience.
You needed textbook information for some questions--they weren't hard to answer after reading text.
Excellent!!
Range:
Not large enough sample to draw significant conclusions, but those who responded were split nearly even among those who scored within or above range appropriate for the theory seminar.

8B. Indicate your performance on the diagnostic test:

_____ Within appropriate range for theory seminar
_____ Below range
_____ Above range

9. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the theory seminar?

Strengths

Compact
Length
Instructor
Convenience
Efficient way to review theory and assess competency
Rich experience
Change process applicable to everyday life
Information applicable to my job
Could work at home at my convenience
Didn't waste time on busy work

Informal atmosphere
Weekend sessions
Flexible time
Size
Theoretical framework
Helped expedite prior assessment process
Interatction with others gave me a perspective on my own experiences.
Self discipline
A lot of information gone over quickly
Challenged me to know what and why I believe
Concise expectations of students
Well-defined curriculum
Received information I lacked

Weaknesses

Needed more lectures
Too few lectures to cover topics
Small size-lacks diversity of ideas and discussion of larger class
Unavoidably may overserve some and underserve others
Did not address all issues in diagnostic test
Too many apparently "rigid" rules without explanation of usefulness of the rules
Class a little small--not enough to share experience
Difficulty absorbing all the reading--little direction as to what should be assimilated
Lack of preparation time
Last session could be longer, especially with number enrolled and the length of each presentation
Materials for presentation not easy to obtain
Need to have book chapters photocopied

WAY TOO MUCH WORK!!
Would have liked to know in advance what would be required of the students for a competence, that a paper and class presentation were necessary
Not enough instructor/class time

10. How would you rate the level of difficulty of this theory seminar?

Virtually all said it was appropriate--one said it was too easy, one said it was too difficult. (true for both summer and fall)

11. Would you recommend this instructor to other students?
On a scale of 1 to 5 4.39 average

12. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the instructor?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Enthusiastic	Didn't always present subjective
Good interaction with students	Pacing
Broad, practical background	Allowed students to take too much class time in discussion
Motivated students, made it fun	
Knew how to look at things from more than one angle	Could be firmer with time limits
Very sharing	Somewhat encumbered by rules
Brought great depth and breadth to subject	Lack of enthusiasm
Very open	Choosing a novel of the leisure class for a group of working adults
Excellent communicators	Unrealistic expectations for people with very little time and who already feel competent in the subject
Friendly, made all welcome	
Committed to topic	
Good problem solver	
Flexible, yet expects students to respond to educational criteria	
Professional, calm, explains well	
Not a pressure cooker	
Good knowledge in difficult area to relate in such brief time	
Allowed group to share and interact	
Friendly and approachable	
Available in office when I tried to call her.	
Practical, varied experience in field	
Excellent job of evaluating level and amount of participants' past experience	
Very effective in conveying difficult political theories	

13. Rate overall performance of the instructor: 4.8 average summer, 4.6 fall
1-5 range 3-5 range fall
One comment: Would need more class time to rate as a "5".

14. Other comments:
Could be offered to more than just Metro students
Could be a "refresher" course for business people
Theory seminars can aid people in the same line of work who share
common interests
Paper and presentations really brought things together for me.
The 10-12 pages required for the paper made me do research I probably wouldn't have done; this was personally beneficial to me.
I didn't mind evaluating my fellow classmates, but found it hard to do while trying to listen.
Concept in line with Metro's philosophy of learning.
It has brought me growth in feeling secure about my competence in the field. I realized I knew a lot more than I expected--also saw areas in which I needed training and improvement.
Benefited greatly--wish more were offered.

I appreciate Metro U including a prior on religious studies; that's an area that I've been learning in my whole life.

I would like to see more theory seminars offered. I found this type of learning compatible with my other time commitments and style of learning.

THEORY SEMINAR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

Winter Quarter Summary, 1986

Theory Seminar Arts and Crafts, Human Services Administration, Overview of Volunteerism, Counseling Chemical Dependency Instructor _____

Date _____

1. Using the following rating scale, indicate how the theory seminar incorporated your practical experience in the following areas:
(1) Very Poor (2) Poor (3) Average (4) Good (5) Excellent

Classroom lecture 4.12 (Average) Range: 2-5
____Very Poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Written and oral assignments 4.68 (Average) Range:3-5
____Very Poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Class Discussions 4.58 (Average) Range: 3-5
____Very Poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Final Evaluation 4.33 (Average) Range: 3-5
____Very Poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

COMMENTS:
There were a lot of aha's! Now I understand my experiences from a broader perspective.
The required reading helped a lot.
Discussion of each other's work helped me to apply the principles to my own work.
It helped me to define and clarify where my work fit in the world of art and I identified with other artists working in other forms who were creating the same ideas.
The different theories helped clarify why certain volunteerism works and others don't.
It showed the holes in my formal knowledge and what I gained.
Theoretical content provided the backbone of my experience and provided me with missing pieces.
The seminar reinforced my knowledge of related theories of human behavior and validates what I am doing.
Helped gain more insight into development of CD treatment from a historical perspective and, most importantly, broaden my knowledge of the diversity of treatment modalities.
Strengthened understanding and conviction of the comprensive model as the design for our future treatment faciltieis.
It gave specific titles, definitions, outline and order to intuitive or working knowledge.

2. Rate how well the theory seminar included learning about the following:

History and trends 4.01 (Average) Range: 2-6
____Very poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Communication 4.06 (Average) Range: 3-5
____Very poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Critical inquiry or scientific method 3.88 (Average) Range: 3-5
____Very poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Theories and theorists or models and structures 4.29 (Average) Range: 3-5
____Very poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Ethics 3.34 (Average) Range: 1-5

____Very poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

Assumptions, values, frame or point of view of people including the instructor 3.98 (Average) Range: 3-5

____Very poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good ____Excellent

3. In a short answer, tell us how the theory seminar differed from a course:

Less lecture time and more independent study.
I could move at my own speed and "fill-in" the areas lacking in my experience.
It was more applied, like working in this given field.
More to the point. More personal.
Concentrated, lots of work at home.
We were expected to bring knowledge with us.
It allowed me to focus content on past experiences and not spend time on situations outside my field.
Great exchange of experiences and ideas that probably would not occur in class setting.
I felt valued as a participant who had previous knwoledge and experience.
A class for me would have been redundant. I feel confident in the methodology, less knowledgeable in the theory area.
Preliminary assignments provided a basis for what I already know and/or am doing in the field of volunteer management--a truly adult learning experience.
much more task-oriented, more intimate, better class discussion and involvement
Knowledge obtained in shorter period of time.
What I like is it is almost a necessity to follow guidelines and adhere strictly to course content because of limited time--very productive.
Shorter and more intense. As a group, there was so much we wanted to learn and discuss and so little time to do it.
Theory seminar allowed me to study book prior to class and pretest gave me some indication of my need for the course.

4. If you have had a prior competence assessment at Metro U, in a short answer, please tell us how the theory seminar differed from a prior assessment. Identify what you saw as its benefits and detriments.

This one it more thorough, intensive .
I had to learn more and dig deeper. A prior says, "I can to it;" a seminar says, "I can do it and I learned more than where I started."
For priors I had to have extensive knowledge in both theory and methodology and had to back up that knowledge. For the theory seminar I knew exactly what my weak area was; with a prior I had to allow someone else to determine my weakness.
Rounded out my practical experience--I felt this was needed.

5. In a short answer, explain in what ways the theory seminar was "user friendly", that is, an educationally and psychologically hospitable format for you, as an experienced adult learner.

Teacher created a good atmosphere.
There was significant challenge and responsibility to accomplish a lot of learning in a short time frame.
I enjoyed the amount of time spent, the format, use of visuals and practical presentations.
Screening process is a valuable tool. As a group we learned from each other in addition to learning from the instructor.
I felt my prior knowledge was validated. The class members were on a compatible learning level and supportive.
I felt we were in some way all teachers, bringing in new information.
It helped me focus my ideas in an open environment. A class is too large to do that.
Lots of individual help.
Enjoy knowing what is expected and then allowed time convenient to reach my goal.
What I brought to the group shaped my part of it.
We all had prior experience and instructor addressed us at above the entry level.
It was very good to be involved in the learning experience-role play, group discussion and case presentation with open question format and instructor's willingness to question and confront students.

6. Did you have too much, enough, or too little practical experience to benefit from the theory seminar? ____ (Average)

____Too Much 20 Enough ____Too Little

7. Did you have too much, enough, or too little theoretical knowledge to benefit from the theory seminar?

____Too Much 17 Enough 1 Too Little

8A. Was the diagnostic test an effective instrument in helping you decide whether to attend a course, a theory seminar or a prior assessment?

14 Yes 2 No

8B. Indicate your performance on the diagnostic test:

8 Within appropriate range for theory seminar
____ Below range
5 Above range

9. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the theory seminar?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Very supportive and growth oriented	Not enough time
Encouragement and opportunity for evaluation of work done, while learning more	Would have liked more current and in-depth information and discussion
Added discipline to experience	
Professional guidance for my usually solitary work	
Role playing, case study presentation	Too many handouts
Significant knowledge, relevant material	It would have been a great group to meet with again.
Instructor enthusiasm	
Homogeneous group	
Individual teaching	
Instructors' assumption of participants'capabilities	
Discussion and sharing personal experiences	

10. How would you rate the level of difficulty of this theory seminar?

___Too Easy _17_Appropriate __1_Too Difficult

11. Would you recommend this instructor to other students?

Difinitely Not Definitely

_____1 _____2 _____3 ____4 ____5 4.65 (Average)

12. What were the strenghts and weaknesses of the instructor?

Strengths

Enthusiasm for teaching
Willing to answer questions and explore alternatives
Well prepared
Impressed by variety and quality of materials
Created comfortable learning atmosphere
Good speaker /communicator
Sense of humor
Made everyone feel a part and important in class disucssion
Good teaching skills
Excellent knowledge of subject
Able to motivate and empathize with students
Able to elicit spontaneous discussion from group
Excellent in utilizing students'input
Very flexible with our class
Understanding of wide variety of situations
Empathetic

Weaknesses

Went through material too fast
Too much info. to cover in short time

13. How would you rate the overall performance of the instructor?

(Average)

____Very Poor ____Poor ____Average ____Good 4.85 Excellent

14. Other Comments:

Thank you for offering this opportunity.
I would recommend this to anyone interested in gaining this prior. I do feel a background plus education in this area is required.
Theory seminars represent an excellent way to evaluate prior competence since actual learning takes place which enhances competence.
More sessions with instructor may have been of value.

THEORY SEMINAR
STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Spring 1985 - Spring 1986

Developed 1984-1985

	SP	SU	F	W	SP
Literary Analysis	2/0*		5/6		5/8
Arts and Crafts	1/0			4/x	1/x
Religious Studies	C/3		3/10		8/20
Public Relations	C/6	3/13			4/16
Marketing	6/8			2/9	
Community Leadership	8/7			5/2	
Volunteerism	12/15			7/19	
Criminal Justice	2/7		2/7		
Human Services Adm.	3/13			5/8	
Counseling		5/23		4/16	
Leadership & Mgmt. in Nursing		7/12			
Chemical Dependency		C/18		7/14	
Political Effectiveness			6/7		3/6

Developed 1985-86	
Management	6/13
Managerial Communications	21/31
Parenting	10/30

* = number attended/number diagnostic tests requested
C = Cancelled
X = Scheduled

6/86

REASONS FOR NOT ENROLLING IN THEORY SEMINARS 1985

Seminars surveyed: Volunteerism, Counseling, Religious Studies, Community Leadership, Chemical Dependency, Human Services Administration, Public Relations, Criminal Justice)
(Note: Some gave multiple answers.)

Total number of responses: 37

Total who decided to go directly to assessment of prior learning: 5

Total who said test was too difficult: 13

Total who decided to enroll in a course instead: 8

Total who said class time was inconvenient: 12

Other reasons:

Advisor said theory seminar was inappropriate for student: 1

Advisor preferred alternative course for degree plan: 2

Taking other demanding course work: 2

Delayed because of lack of IEP approval: 2

Didn't have time to go over materials: 1

Didn't feel qualified: 1

REASONS FOR NOT ENROLLING WINTER 1986

Seminars Surveyed: Marketing, Volunteerism, Human Services Administration, Counseling, Chemical Dependency

Total number of responses: 26 *

Total who decided to go directly to assessment of prior learning: 2

Total who said test was too difficult: 4

Total who decided to enroll in a course instead: 4

Total who said class time was inconvenient: 6

Other reasons:
Didn't get test 2

Forgot 1

Too busy 3

Delayed decision 1

Had surgery 1

Had already taken course in the area 1

Interested in another class 1

Unsure that seminar fit my needs 1

Instructor deemed student not good candidate 1

Financial aid not yet approved 1

Experience inappropriate for seminar 2

*(Note: Some gave multiple answers.)

PRIOR COMPETENCE ASSESSMENTS/ ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP REGISTRATIONS*

	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	TOTAL
FY84	359	179	191	390	1119
FY85	138	147	168	211	664
FY86	245	161	204	155**	765

*Taken from the MIS-29
**Spring registrations are still in progress

GROWTH IN REGISTRATION FOR ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING AT METRO STATE

(Note: Registration for assessment of prior learning was abnormally high in FY84 because that was the last opportunity students had to pay substantially less for assessment of prior learning than for other competence-generating learning opportunities.)

	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	TOTAL
FY85	138	147	168	211 ***	664
FY86	245	161	204	155**	765
GAIN	78%	10%	21%	Pending	Pending

**Spring registrations still in progress

*** Theory seminars first offered

THEORY SEMINAR ENROLLMENT PATTERNS SPRING, 1985 - WINTER, 1986

Time	No. Theory Seminars Offered	No. Theory Seminars Held	Number enrolling	Number requesting diagnostic tests	Ratio (Percentage)
Spring/ Summer '85	13	10	49	125	4/10 (.39)
Fall '85	4	4	16	30	1/2 (.53)
Winter '86	7	7	34	68	1/2 (.5)
Spring '86	9	8	58	124	1/2 .47
Total	33	29	157	347	4/9 .45

*Spring quarter not yet complete

Synthesis of Advisory Panel Critiques and Comments

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

ISSUE: Reliability and Validity (for measuring upper division university learning)

Halberg

In developing instruments of evaluation for prior learning it is often clear that the practical experience is worthy of credit though lacking in a theory component. Some students may have evolved a theoretical base for their practice without being aware of the academic theory that relates to it. I would suggest putting the experience into academic terms includes:

Articulation of the Experience: putting appropriate words to the practical experience.

Review of the Research/Literature: discovering a collective body of experience related to the personal experience.

Analysis of the Experience: comparing the individual experience with the collective one.

Synthesis: validating the personal experience in light of the collective one and making subsequent generalizations.

The purpose of the initial evaluation (or diagnostic test), then, is to try to discover the depth of learning that has taken place in the practical experience and present it in academic terms.

The self evaluation instrument is presently biased toward the more educationally sophisticated learner. Format and language more common to the work place might more adequately identify what has been learned.

Clark

The theoretical learning is measured by a matching concepts exercise which combines different types of concepts within the same brief 12-item list. An intelligent person with little knowledge of the subject could guess his/her way to a good score.

Chickering

Student is asked to produce responses requiring reasonably sophisticated analysis and interpretation.

Little — Test is too limited to give good reading; it needs to be a longer test for greater reliability and validity.

White — Asking for the name of a book or magazine read may elicit just a title which will not indicate whether the student really read or understood the material. Also, whether or not the person has read something recently may indicate current understanding.

Ground rules for oral interview diagnostic test: Will probe questions be allowed? Is student given immediate feedback about adequacy of answers for claiming a competency? How are answers recorded and scored? Written description of the process would be helpful.

ISSUE: Measurement of fact, theory and experience

Little — Diagnostic test starts with experience of the adult: what is your definition, opinion, experience? This will provide much evidence of practical learning but it is not so effective in providing evidence of theoretical knowledge. Students may have more theoretical knowledge than they are asked to demonstrate.

Clark — The practical and experiential parts of the test yield some relevant clues as to whether student should take a course, theory seminar or proceed to assessment of prior learning. The matching exercise fails to teach even as it tests by suggesting a hierarchical outline or systematic framework of concepts, yet not communicating the framework in which these concepts are lodged.

The dagnostic test doesn't seem to assume much student knowledge of theory nor test for it. It does not ask students about their experience.

Thorsland — It is not clear whether practical learning is measured in the pretest. It might be better to have questions asking student to give examples of theoretical concepts using personal experiences on the job.

Jacobs — When crediting experience as part of the pre-test, clarify with examples of what qualifies as an experience.

Chickering — A student can match terms and definitions without

being able to apply analytic elements in sophisticated fashion. Further, because a student can deal effectively with one critical term doesn't indicate which others that student might be able to handle.

White — Proportionately more weight should be given to actual experience. Giving a case history in the field allows for demonstrating knowledge and provides the instructor with concrete examples for the seminar.

Asking the student on the diagnostic test what she/he would provide as portfolio material could be a learning experience for the student and helpful for the instructor.

The diagnostic test flows quite naturally from more general experience to specific knowledge. This should put students at ease and help them do well on the test.

Wutzdorff — Since applicants are coming from working settings, their knowledge of the field is likely to be in the action mode, and therefore to use a written assessment which is more in the traditional academic mode might not tap into their reservoir of working knowledge of their field as more performance-based assessments might.

Diagnostic test needs to cover application of theory better. Student might know the theories but the test doesn't clearly measure whether that knowledge makes a difference in their own practice.

ISSUE: Relation of diagnostic test to content of theory seminar.

Little — Diagnostic test directly keyed to theory seminar and should give accurate reading of what to emphasize.

White — The test will surface a great deal about the student's medium and general level of theoretical knowledge. This should put students at ease and help them do well on the test.

It is not clear if examples from students' diagnostic tests will be used in the seminar. If it is a major goal to utilize information gathered on the diagnostic tests to adapt the seminar to a particular group, the syllabus might include a statement to that effect.

The last section of the syllabus has to do with ethics, but none of the diagnostic questions deal

directly with this topic. A question about major ethical issues or a case study with an ethical component would prepare students for a major section of the seminar and give the instructor an indication of students' concerns.

Bates — Because any test probably cannot examine all areas, test results might be supplemented with other diagnostic techniques, e.g., student/faculty interviews. The relationship between students' performance on the test and the reality of their needs demonstrated in the seminars will be the ultimate check on the test's effectiveness.

Wutzdorff — Students might be presented with scenarios describing very different types of clients and then be asked to outline a care plan. In the process they would reveal their knowledge of practice.

SYLLABI

ISSUE: Identifying what students have left to do and determining the parameters of the theory seminar to make clear how much and what will be done (This includes clarifying theory seminar objectives and focus.)

Clark — The seminar appears to be an interesting course, proposing to deal with the background and contextual aspects and rather indirectly with theories.

Little — In the short time and heavy content of the seminar, I find it impossible for the student to come to appreciate theories, much less to apply them. Yet content areas are well selected--ones emotionally important to many adults. That should provide for student interest and motivation.

White — The syllabus seems to address history, definitions and steps essential to the subject. The one common theoretical component which does not appear directly is communication. Perhaps it should be listed on the syllabus, especially since the take-home exam has questions which deal directly with communication.

Spelling out expectations should assure success for participants. Videotaped model or written guidelines would be particularly helpful in the critical dialogue area, as many students do not have adequate experience with this.

ISSUE: Syllabus must make it clear how students will build on and integrate practical knowledge with theoretical concepts.

Clark — Given the considerable freedom students have in designing their small group project assignments and individual assignments, they should be able to reflect on their experiences and develop new insights.

It simply is not clear from reading the syllabus just how students will integrate their practical knowledge. I don't know why this would be called a theory seminar. Theory, as used in academic settings, is misapplied in the course title. It seems to be a straightforward overview course.

Little — Forms of theoretical components are well represented; definitions, history, compare and contrast, process, standards.

Start with students' experience, not lecture. If lecture comes first, students may not feel free to share their experiences if contrary to the perspective of the lecture. Or they may feel they must reject their experiences as invalid.

Halberg — More general discussion may be good for getting students involved but less productive than actually providing practical problems to solve. Instructor could design problems so key elements would surface. Students could add problems encountered in their own experience. Adults tend to prefer this "hands-on" approach that puts life into theory.

Jacobs — Activities are well suited to build upon student's previous experiences and provide theoretical components.

Chickering — I don't see much building on prior experiential learning. The possibility is there with the attitude questionnaires, but there is no information on how responses to the questionnaires is to be used.

White — I very much liked the way theoretical and experiential learning are reinforced in this syllabus. It is obvious that what a person actually creates is of major importance in assessing his/her knowledge. Additionally, the individual's ability to respond critically to another's work is also stressed.

The syllabus might be written so each aspect of a major component is given its own line. This may help reinforce the learning that takes place in the seminar when students look at the syllabus.

Making clearer exactly how prior learning will be incorporated into the seminar and the evaluation process would strengthen the curriculum materials.

Wutzdorff — Case study approach seems most appropriate for experienced persons and thus should help to bring students from the action mode into more theoretical realms.

ISSUE: Developing learning strategies that are at the same time comprehensive, innovative and adaptable to groups of varying sizes and needs.

Halberg — If the seminar is to be "one size fits all", what is the purpose of the various features of the evaluation instrument? There is little in the curriculum materials to address the diversity of experience and

understanding students bring. Since evaluation is divided into several emphases--philosophy, motivational theory, management, the seminar should have units that clearly address each of these. The seminar might vary in length for individual students according to the number of units needed.

Required papers are generic and don't give focus on student needs. Perhaps student and teacher could determine appropriate focus and format jointly.

Since the sessions are divided into discrete topical areas, develop learning strategies that are comprehensive, innovative and adaptable. Does the student attend all sessions or only those in which they are deficient?

Little — Though lecture is the dominant strategy, it may be ok. Adults with much practical experience may be quite satisfied to learn in a lecture the elements of theory that support their work.

White — Even though time is so precious in the seminar, the instructor may wish to build in more discussion and other means of having students collectively and directly integrate their experineces with the content being presented.

Wutzdorff — The emphasis on multiple perspectives is excellent. I would enhance it by ensuring that all students in the learning exercises actually take on all of the viewpoints by role playing them. Student should especially be required to take on and defend a perspective that is quite opposed to their own.

Consider videotaping class discussion to provide permanent assessment record to monitor progress. This tool greatly enhances students' ability to self-assess, hopefully giving them some lifelong learning skills.

EVALUATION

ISSUE: Developing evaluation procedure with sufficient complexity to reliably measure upper division university level learning, yet limit what students need to know and what they need to do to prove what they know.

Little	Evaluation process seems to adequately address three criteria for experiential learning: transferability, higher level cognitive ability, theoretical and practical elements.
Thorsland	Both paper options ask the student to integrate, synthesize, analyze and evaluate--all advanced level skills indicative of upper level learning. The opportunity is there for valid measure of the student's advanced learning level.
Clark	The evaluation addresses some theoretical components, but not enough attention on theories of the field.
Little	The evaluation does assess theory and practical application in the abstract. What is missing is the meaning to the individual.
Clark	Evaluation process is minimal with only a take-home exam, no papers, projects or other activities. Students are asked to relate their experiential learning to theoretical learning, but there is no suggestion as to how this might be done. This is minimally satisfactory for a measure of upper division learning, and not an imaginative evaluation process.
	The instructor has prepared a thoughtful narrative outline for developmental guidelines of the group and individual reports. A checklist rating parallels the outline of group and individual reports, helping to structure the evaluation process for student participants and the instructor, assuring universality in the process.
White	All components together offer a student both quantitative and qualitative ways to demonstrating learning. Because of this, the evaluation process appears to assess theoretical understanding, practical knowledge and their integration/application.
	Since I am not in the field, it is hard to know if this represents measurement of an upper division

course. The variety of evaluation tools and their intercompatibility in terms of the learning being assessed strike me as very comprehensive.

ISSUE: Make sure the content and focus of the evaluation are consistent with the stated goals and objectives of the course.

Clark — Focus of the reports, though stimulating and desirable, are not on the mark of the seminar title.

Halberg — What are you looking for in the evaluation process?

ISSUE: Develop evaluation that adequately assesses theoretical understanding, practical knowledge and integration and application of these components.

Halberg — I find the use of a diagnostic test as part of the evaluation quite inappropriate. It should be used for diagnosis only.

The analytical category appears to be an excellent problem-solving exercise that calls on a strong theoretical base to examine the results of the experience.

Bates — The inclusion of four different types of instruments provides a balance. The marketing case, participation and paper each provide excellent opportunities for students to show understanding, integration and application of knowledge, the quests on the multiple choice exam appear to be balanced in breadth and depth.

Appendix D

GRANT PROPOSAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT 1

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION 2

- Description of the problem
- Past attempts to deal with the problem
- Generalizability of the problem

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT 7

- Theory seminars
- Diagnostic testing
- Seminar format
- Seminar content
- Seminar objectives
- Faculty training
- Example of theory seminars
- Specific activities and timelines
- Evaluation activities
- Project directors
- Contacts with groups and individuals affected by the project

PROJECT OUTCOMES 24

- Short-term outcomes
- Long-term outcomes

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT 26

- Institutional capacity
- Institutional commitment

PLANS FOR WIDER IMPACT 28

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVES 31

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Introduction to Metropolitan State University
Appendix B: "The Last Step: Adding Theory to Practice"
Appendix C: Public Speaking Materials
Appendix D: Literary Analysis Theory Seminar
Appendix E: Criteria for University Level Learning
Appendix F: Resumes
Appendix G: Letters of support

ABSTRACT

As an increasing number of adult students enter or return to postsecondary education, colleges and universities must find better ways of identifying and evaluating students' experiential learning and relating that learning to objectives. To date, colleges and universities have not adequately dealt with the education of experienced adults. Traditional courses frequently ignore adults' rich experiential learning. The emergence of assessment of experiential learning programs has been a very important development; however, most of these programs utilize a portfolio approach to assessment or use evaluation methodologies which place little emphasis on theoretical knowledge.

Metro U believes that college level learning has both theoretical and practical elements. As a pioneer in working with employed adults and in assessing experiential learning, Metro U has found that many adults who have strong experience-based learning frequently lack theoretical understanding of the field of study. Metro U proposes to develop theory seminars for areas in which students are likely to have significant experiential learning but lack a theoretical base. In addition to strengthening academic quality, the workshops will provide a mechanism that is time- and cost-effective for both students and institutions. Moreover, an operational model will be developed to facilitate the adaptation of the theory seminar concept by colleges and universities and other educational institutions interested in experiential learning.

Project activities will include:

1) identification of areas of need;
2) development of training materials;
3) faculty training;
4) development of theory seminar materials and syllabi;
5) review of materials and field testing and revision of workshops; and
6) dissemination of project outcomes.

As a recognized leader in the field of assessment of experiential learning and one of the founding task force institutions of the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL), Metro U has the experience, expertise and commitment to carry out this project. With assistance from the Fund, Metro U will have the resources needed to attain the project goals and to disseminate the impact of this model project to higher education institutions and associations across the country.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Description of the problem: Metropolitan State University was established in 1971 to provide an alternative approach to education for adult students. As a part of this mission, Metro U has been committed to individualized competence-based education - education which recognizes the maturity and responsibilities of adults and the knowledge they bring with them to the university setting. (A more detailed description of Metro U is included in Appendix A.)

Metro U faculty have had a difficult time adequately serving adult students within the constraints of the three major learning options:

- courses;
- independent studies; and
- assessment of experiential learning.

The problems confronting Metro U are replicated at all institutions educating experienced adults.

- Courses virtually ignore students' experiential knowledge. Textbooks, even advanced textbooks, are usually written for students with book learning rather than work or community learning. Further, experienced adults often take courses with students who do not have practical experience and have little interest in it. Consequently, they are bored when they have to repeat material they already know, are frustrated when their hard won experiential knowledge is ignored, and confused when classroom learning appears at odds with their practical experiences.

- Independent studies overcome the problem of repeating material already known, but they still have the problem of using material written and organized for students with little or no practical experience. Further, they do not provide for the exchange of ideas and challenges between students and faculty which is at the heart of good education.

- Although assessment of experiential learning recognizes what students have learned in the community and at work and ensures that students do not repeat familiar material, faculty often find it difficult to equate students' previous knowledge with traditional academic standards for learning. Although experiential learning can result in practical knowledge that is as broad as knowledge gained in university or college courses, such learning often lacks a strong theoretical base. Practical knowledge may be sufficient in work situations but as educators we have a responsibility to teach students to think critically and to place and integrate facts within a broad theoretical framework.

  Further, the assessment process can be psychologically inhospitable to the adult student returning or entering a college or university after years at work. These students are often unsure what college level learning is, unsure if their knowledge will measure up, and intimidated by the evaluation process. More importantly, because institutions awarding credit for experiential learning often find it difficult to equate that learning with traditional college learning, there is the possibility of eroding standards. (Problems posed by these learning strategies are more fully discussed in an article by Drs. Webb and Harvey in Appendix B.)

To ensure quality, adult students are often forced to either spend time in the classroom re-learning what they already know or miss the opportunity to build upon prior knowledge which may be integral to their educational goals. Furthermore, they receive little help in relating new learning to experiential learning or in resolving conflict between knowledge gained in the working world and that gained through books.

The problem addressed by this proposal is that of providing education which meets the needs of adult students while continuing to ensure the high quality of education at a college or university. As Metro U's standards have become more explicit and our procedures for evaluating experiential learning have become more stringent, we have seen a decrease

in the number of prior competences claimed by students and an increase in traditional coursework. This in and of itself is not necessarily a concern if the needs of our students are being met. However, because of the problems with courses and independent studies mentioned previously, we do not believe we are doing all we can to ensure that students have ample opportunities to build upon prior knowledge which may be integral to their educational goals.

Past attempts to deal with the problem: Metro U has made a number of attempts to deal with the problem. Originally Metro U emphasized individualized independent studies and courses in which the emphasis was placed on individualizing the syllabus to match the particular students in the class. With dramatic enrollment increases over the last five years, these alternatives have become less feasible. Increased enrollment precludes the opportunity for extensive individualization in courses or the possibility of working with all students on an independent study basis.

It also makes it difficult to work as closely with each student on the identification and evaluation of their experience as was common practice in the past. Current procedures for the assessment of experiential learning at Metro U consists of providing students with written guidelines and materials related to prior competences and to the competence assessment process. Among the assessment materials developed by the faculty are:

- an Evaluator's Notebook, which includes the criteria and techniques used by faculty members to evaluate experiential learning;
- a CAEL Operational Models Project Report which outlines Metro U's assessment processes;
- student handbooks and guidelines on identifying college level learning;
- selected diagnostic tests; and
- regularly scheduled group assessments in supervision, public speaking and writing.

For example, students wishing to have experiential learning in public speaking assessed do so through a group assessment workshop. In the Evaluator's Notebook students find information on the assessment process and the evaluation criteria and guidelines for preparing their speeches. Students attending the public speaking assessment workshops submit written outlines of their speeches, make presentations to other students and to two faculty evaluators, and evaluate the other speakers. The evaluators use the outlines, video-tapes and evaluations to evaluate students. (The materials used in this workshop are included in Appendix C.)

These measures, however, have not resolved the problem. As a result of experiences in the assessment workshops and in individual evaluations of prior learning, the faculty became aware of the need for an intermediate step. This led to the development of theory seminars - short seminars focussing on adding theoretical knowledge to students' practical knowledge. Although theory seminars have been implemented on a pilot basis, after brief experiences with these seminars, it became evident that they met a need,

but that additional resources would be necessary to adequately develop materials and to train instructors to expand the concept.

Generalizability of the problem: The problem of adequately addressing the experiential learning of adult students is not unique to Metro U. With changing demographic patterns and changing patterns of attendance, adult students are becoming more important to many colleges and universities. Designing educational processes which meet their needs is not only good educational practice, but it also makes particular institutions more attractive to the adult student who is making decisions of when and where to return to school.

The generalizability of this problem is further demonstrated by the interest Metro u has found in the work they have been doing with theory seminars. Drs. Webb and Harvey, the proposed project directors for this grant, have in the past two years written an article and made two national presentations on the subject of theory seminars. They have received a widespread favorable response to the concept of theory seminars. The Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) has asked them to present a special workshop on the topic and to address the CAEL National Assembly in fall 1984 and the University Without Walls at the University of Minnesota has approached them to establish cooperative theory seminars.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Theory seminars: Metro U proposes to develop a series of seminars designed to provide the theoretical framework for a variety of subject areas. These theory seminars will be designed for adults with extensive practical experience, and will concentrate on adding theoretical learning to students' practical knowledge and on the relationships between theory and practice. The seminars will have the following characteristics.

Diagnostic testing: The first step in the theory seminar process will be diagnostic testing. Faculty members will develop a testing process which can:

- be used by faculty to judge students' levels of competence and appropriately recommend three courses of action:
    1) attending a regular class;
    2) attending a theory seminar;
    3) or going directly through the assessment or experiential learning process; and
- identify areas of student weaknesses so that the seminars can be designed to meet those weaknesses.

Developing diagnostic tests will be integral to the seminar development process. The first step in both processes is that of clearly identifying the knowledge and skills which constitute a university level competence in the particular subject area and to express those in terms of measurable objectives. Having done so, a testing process to measure those objectives will be developed.

The diagnostic testing process will mirror the assessment process, but focus on attaining formative rather than summative information. As a consequence, it will be less comprehensive and time consuming than the final assessment process.

In literary analysis a diagnostic test may ask students to:

- identify the theme or main idea of a short story;
- describe its setting, explaining the importance of the setting to the story and its symbolic significance;
- analyze the point of view of the author;
- analyze the attitude of the author toward the main characters, the subject and the narrative action; and
- describe the main conflict in the story, including the underlying causes of the conflict, the events that contributed to it, and the results of the conflict on each of the main characters.

In counseling a diagnostic test may ask students to analyze a written or visual simulation for:

- specific counseling techniques used;
- counseling theories which would explain the strengths and weaknesses of the techniques used;
- alternative counseling techniques which would better fit the situation giving reasons for their choice; and
- long range counseling strategies for the simulated situation referencing the theories underlying them.

Students who know little or none of the material asked for in the diagnostic test will be advised to attend a course. Those who can respond to all of the points at an upper division college level will be advised to begin the assessment of experiential learning process. Those falling in between will be advised to attend a theory seminar. Faculty may

conduct an interview with students in the high and low range of the middle group in order to make a more exact determination of the extent of their knowledge before giving placement advice.

Diagnostic testing for students entering the theory seminars will also tell faculty the areas of students' greatest weakness, both individually and collectively, thereby aiding faculty in developing classroom syllabi and subjects for individual projects.

Seminar format: Metro U resident and adjunct faculty will teach all the seminars. Consistent with the university's commitment to community resources, most theory seminars will be taught by adjunct faculty. Ninety-six percent of Metro U's adjunct faculty are employed by private business or industries, other postsecondary institutions, state or local government, or are self-employed. Ninety percent have previous teaching experience, and over 70 percent have master or doctoral degrees. This blending of knowledge of both theory and current practice makes Metro U's adjunct faculty uniquely qualified to conduct theory seminars. As practitioners as well as educators, community faculty have first hand knowledge of the workplace and community experiences students will be coming from and of the type and extent of learning they will have acquired there. Further, as educators, community faculty are aware of the theoretical knowledge most often absent from these work and community experiences.

The scheduling for seminars will vary depending upon the field. Different models will be developed with varying amounts of classroom time and varying lengths of time between classes. These models will be evaluated to identify those most appropriate for each discipline.

Students will complete readings, research and independent projects between seminar sessions. At the end of the seminar sessions, the instructors will evaluate students' knowledge based on one or more of the following:

- written and oral exams;
- papers, and/or
- simulations or research projects.

Seminar content: The seminar content will include the theoretical material most frequently absent from experiential learning. This usually includes the history and innovators of the field, the accepted organization of knowledge, the language and vocabulary, and the analytic processes used in the field.

Teaching will build upon students' experiences, using those experiences as a starting point and making them integral to theoretical learning and critical thinking.

Seminar objectives: The objectives of a theory seminar are as follows:

- Students will learn to analyze and compare theories and the relationships of those theories to life experiences.
- Students will learn to better access resources (for example, books, journals, experts) enabling them to further their individualized studies.

- Students who successfully complete the seminar and the evaluation process (that is, students who are judged by faculty to have demonstrated university level learning) will be able to include that learning in their degree programs.

Metro U's assessment process, including theory seminars, is summarized in Figure 1 on the following page. The advantages of theory seminars are included in Appendix B in an article by Drs. Webb and Harvey.

Theory seminars incorporate the strengths of traditional classes, independent studies, and assessment of experiential learning while minimizing the weaknesses intrinsic in each:

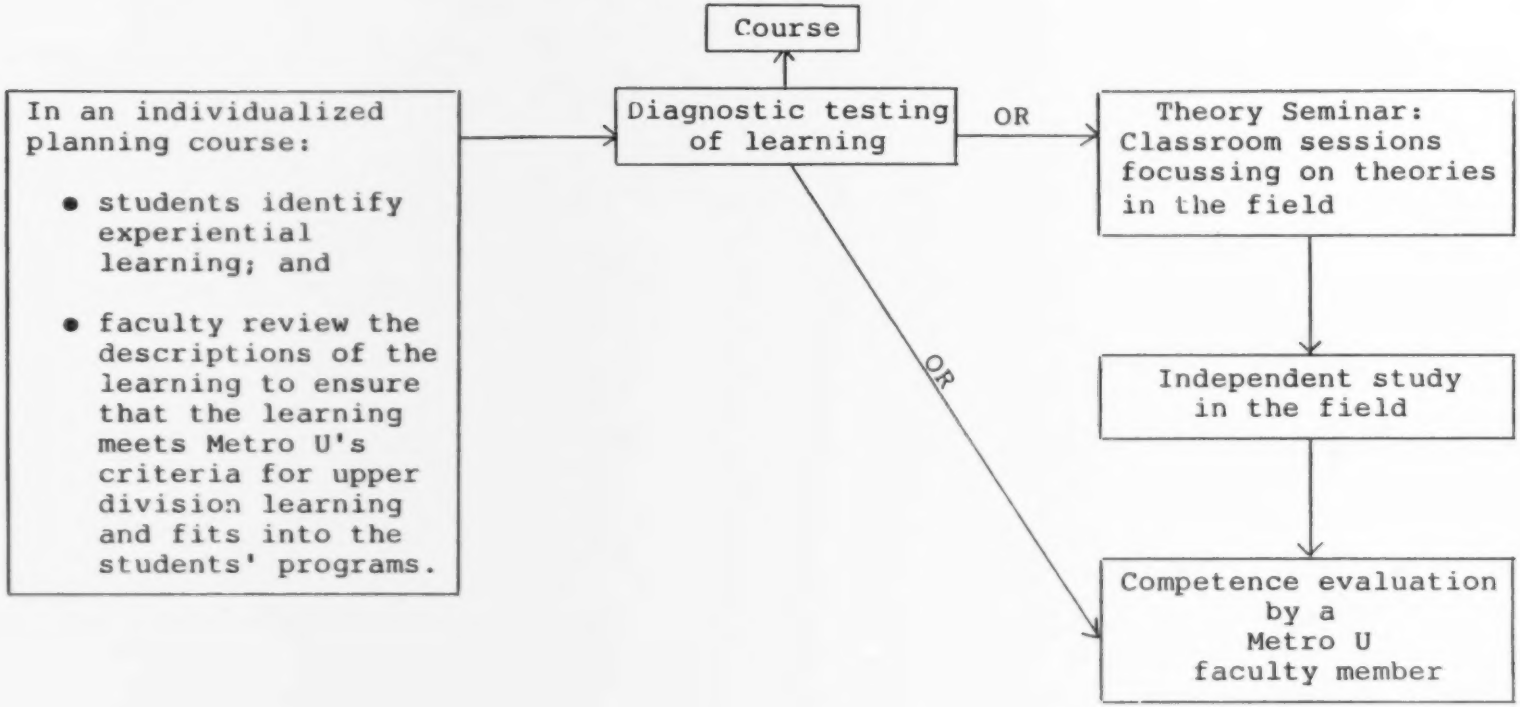
- Unlike traditional courses, theory seminars are individualized and build upon students' knowledge rather than repeating or ignoring that knowledge. This has advantages for adults who often excell at independent studies. Also, in theory seminars, experienced students spend less time in the classroom and little time being bored by material they already know.

- Theory seminars have advantages over individualized learning or independent studies for both students and staff; they give students the opportunity to interact with college faculty and with each other, enabling students to enter into an intellectual community they otherwise might have missed. Such an approach is especially useful when the format allows students who have parallel or similar experiences, but differing knowledge, to interact with each other - it not only gives students an opportunity for intellectual discourse, but gives them the chance to learn from each other. To staff it gives the advantage of efficiency - it is more efficient to work with a group of students than with large numbers of individual students.

- Theory seminars also address student and institutional problems related to the assessment of learning. For students long absent from college, such a format is not only educationally more interesting and rewarding, but psychologically more hospitable than the assessment of learning by faculty they do not know who use criteria with which they are not familiar. As students learn more about the specific subject, they are able to identify weaknesses and do additional work before having that knowledge evaluated. Thus, the seminars provide diagnostic

FIGURE 1

PROCESS OF RECOGNIZING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING


Course
In an individualized planning course:
• students identify experiential learning; and
• faculty review the descriptions of the learning to ensure that the learning meets Metro U's criteria for upper division learning and fits into the students' programs.
Diagnostic testing of learning
OR
Theory Seminar: Classroom sessions focussing on theories in the field
OR
Independent study in the field
Competence evaluation by a Metro U faculty member

evaluation. In addition, exposure to an academic discipline encourages confidence in other academic areas and gives students the tools needed for individualized studies focusing on theoretical knowledge in other subject areas.

The benefit to the institution is quality assurance. Using this format, faculty can ensure, through direct instruction, that students know the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of the field in which credit is awarded. Thus, the experiential learning recognized is at least equivalent to the more traditional learning recognized by academic institutions.

Faculty training: During faculty training specific theory seminars will be developed. Faculty will be chosen to develop and teach theory seminars on the basis of their theoretical knowledge of the discipline, their practical experiences in it, and their past success as teachers of adult students. The grant requests support for 40 hours for 15 faculty to develop theory seminars and a further $100 to revise their materials. Ten faculty will be trained during the winter quarter of the first year with three theory seminars offered late that quarter, four offered spring quarter, and three summer quarter. The remaining five faculty will be trained during the fall of the second year, offering their seminars winter and spring. The project directors will undertake pedagogical research and develop training materials during the fall of the first year, revising them in the spring of that year after the first training sessions and first implementation of the seminars have taken place. Faculty training will not be limited to work before the seminars start but will include evaluation of the seminars during and immediately after implementation.

The training of faculty will include:

- instruction in pedagogical theory;
- application of pedagogical theory to adult students;
- identification of learning outcomes in each subject area;
- identification of theoretical aspects most often missing from practical learning;
- instruction on diagnostic and summation testing;
- instruction on uses, strengths and weaknesses of alternative learning strategies;
- instruction on alternative evaluative techniques including simulations, role playing, field projects;
- pilot testing of diagnostic tests with entering students;
- strategies for building on students' experiential knowledge and for comparing theory to practice;
- strategies for teaching students the literature, history and vocabulary of the field;
- strategies to enable students to handle both theoretical and practical knowledge objectively and articulately;
- group discussion and critique of the results of learning strategies and evaluation instruments after implementation;
- group discussion and critique of training materials and strategies; and
- development of testing and teaching materials.

Example of theory seminars: No seminar format is applicable to all disciplines; nor is there one general recipe for the content of a theory seminar. Developing appropriate formats and identifying the theoretical content most often lacking in experiential learning will be a major emphasis of faculty training. The following two descriptions, though, illustrate the theory process.

The seminar in Literary Analysis (see Appendix D for more detail) includes three main activities:

1) assessment of the current level of each student;

2) lectures on the main components of literary studies; and

3) a detailed explanation of the tools used in the final assessment of student learning.

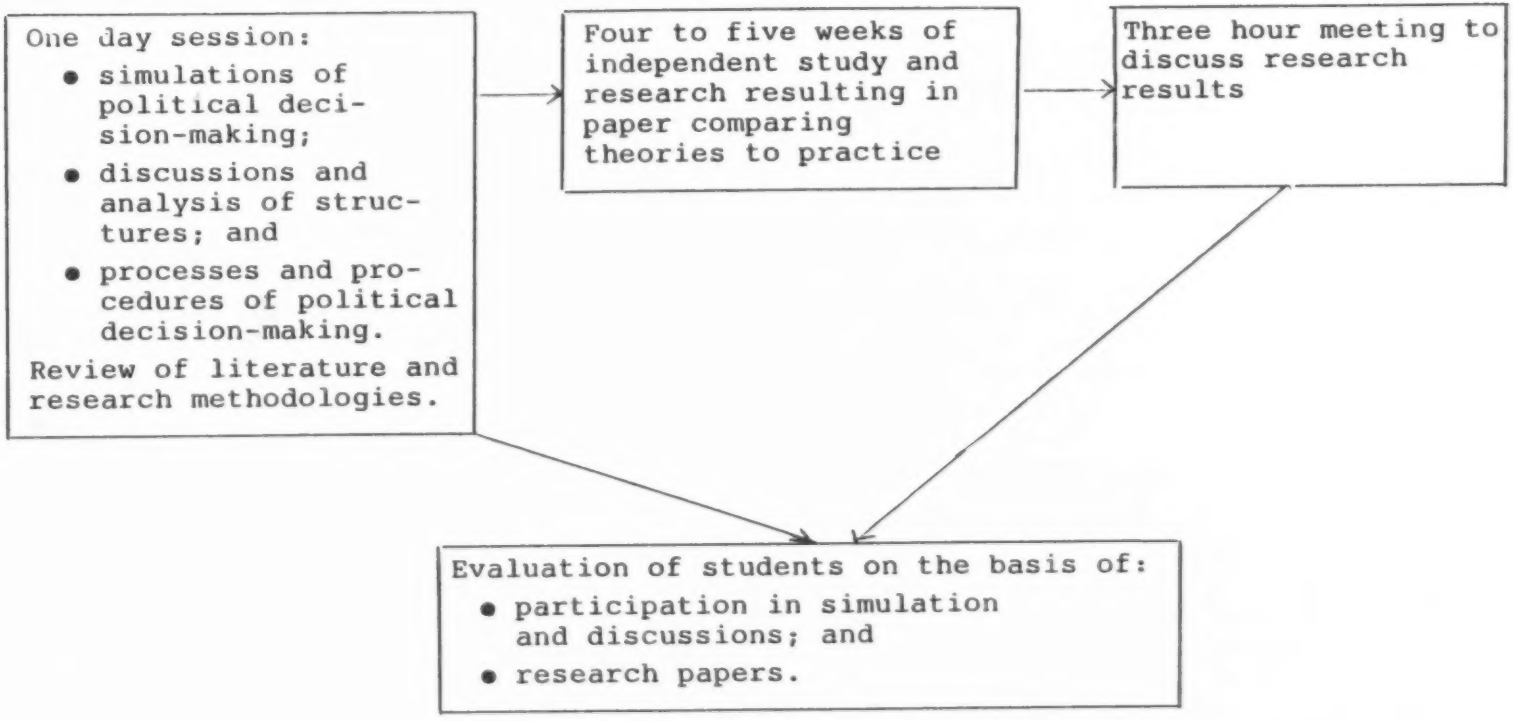
Using a checklist for assessing skills and knowledge in literary studies, students describe their levels of knowledge, giving arguments and evidence for their self-evaluations. Through this and the discussion that follows, possible levels and kinds of knowledge and their components are reviewed. Then, using a work that all students have read (for example, The Red Badge of Courage or a short story), the faculty member discusses the work in terms of literary analysis (theme, setting, author's point of view, evaluation of validity of a particular literary action), period, logical or sociological analysis, naturalism, and so forth. Finally, the instructor prepares students for the assessment of their knowledge which occurs a month after the theory seminar sessions. For that assessment, students all read the same book (for example, The Heart of Darkness), review literature on literary analysis (bibliography in Appendix D), and write an analytical essay. At the assessment meeting, each student gives a 10-15 minute analytical presentation of the book and critiques the presentations of other students. Students are assessed on their written analyses, their oral presentations, their critiques of other students, and any portfolio materials they present.

A second theory seminar has been developed in Political Efficacy. Many adults, both as volunteers and as paid staff, have gained knowledge of the political party processes and behaviors, various governmental bodies and agencies, and campaign management. In an all-day seinar, students with experiential learning in one or more of these fields participate in simulations and discussions that involve the analysis of structures, processes and procedures of political decision-making, including legislative behavior and parliamentary law. The simulation replicates the formal structures and procedures used in political decision-making. Debriefing sessions focus on theory - they are used to analyze and discuss the simulations and the political, sociological and legislative theories underlying the political process. Students also discuss the important literature and research methodologies in the field.

At the end of the seminar session, the instructor assists students in selecting research topics related to their personal experiences. After working independently on their research, students meet to discuss the results of their research and its relationship to practical experiences. Evaluation of the students' knowledge is based upon their performances in the simulation, their abilities to analyze the simulation, and their understandings of research methodology and literature in the field as demonstrated by their research papers. Figure II, on the following page, summarizes this seminar process.

FIGURE II

EXAMPLE OF A THEORY SEMINAR IN POLITICAL PARTY PROCESS


One day session:
• simulations of political decision-making;
• discussions and analysis of structures; and
• processes and procedures of political decision-making.
Review of literature and research methodologies.
Four to five weeks of independent study and research resulting in paper comparing theories to practice
Three hour meeting to discuss research results
Evaluation of students on the basis of:
• participation in simulation and discussions; and
• research papers.

Specific activities and timelines: (See Figure III)

Academic year 1984-85:

- Based on student needs, the faculty will identify 10 areas in which adult students are likely to have acquired significant practical and life/work experiences and in which students' knowledge gaps are uniform. These will be distributed over the entire curriculum on the basis of student demand and the appropriateness of the format. (There are some fields for which theory seminars are not appropriate. Some areas in which seminars can be developed are counseling, political efficacy, studio art, literary analysis and accounting.)

- A panel of educators from area colleges and from non-traditional institutions throughout the United States will be identified. The panel will evaluate the project materials, and a handbook (see below) as they are developed.

- Ten faculty will be trained to develop and teach theory seminars. Training will include instruction in the use of various teaching and assessment techniques, and will focus on identifying the important theoretical components common to all disciplines and those components specific to the particular disciplines of the faculty. During the training sessions, faculty will develop appropriate syllabi, diagnostic materials and assessment processes. This will be an important outcome of the training since only subject matter experts are able to identify the appropriate content and formats for seminars in their disciplines.

- Resident faculty in each of the disciplines will review the syllabi and all materials developed for each of the seminars. They will work with the seminar instructors until the materials reflect high quality, upper division, university level instruction. Materials will also be reviewed by the panel of evaluators both before they are first used in seminars and after they are revised following the evaluation of the initial seminars.

- Seminars will be evaluated as they are offered and revised as appropriate.

- Ten theory seminars will be scheduled as part of the regular curriculum offerings of Metro U. It is anticipated that over the two years of the grant, at least 200 students will enroll in the seminars.

FIGURE III

TIMELINE FOR ACTIVITIES

(Year one: 1984-85)

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
• Identify with other faculty 10 areas appropriate for theory seminars • Conduct pedogogical research • Develop training materials • Identify a panel of educators from area colleges and from nontraditional colleges across the nation	• Train 10 theory seminar instructors • Supervise development of seminar curriculum and materials • Coordinate the review of syllabi and materials through the curriculum review process • Offer three theory seminars late in the quarter • Provide written reports to FIPSE as required	• Evaluate winter theory seminars and make appropriate revisions with instructors • Follow up with students who do not successfully complete winter seminars • Offer four theory seminars • Revise faculty training materials • Provide written reports to FIPSE as required	• Evaluate spring theory seminars and make appropriate revisions with instructors • Begin writing handbook for dissemination • Offer three theory seminars • Provide written reports to FIPSE as required

(Year two: 1985-86)

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
• Conduct summative evaluation of theory seminars and make final revisions • Continue writing handbook • Train five additional theory workshop instructors • Provide written reports to FIPSE as required	• Offer two new theory seminars • Plan regional conference on theory seminars (tentatively with CAEL) • Propose presentations for national and regional conferences • Prepare scholarly article • Complete handbook • Offer regularly scheduled theory seminars	• Offer three new theory seminars • Hold regional conference on theory seminars (Tentatively with CAEL) • Make presentations at national and/or regional conferences (this may occur in fall 1986) • Complete scholarly article • Disseminate handbook • Offer regularly scheduled theory seminars • Provide written reports to FIPSE as required	

Academic year 1985-86:

- A handbook, which outlines procedures for developing theory seminars, model curricula, and the pedagogical theories and the methods of training instructors, will be published.

- Information gained throughout the project will be disseminated in a number of ways, including presentations at national and regional conferences, an article in a professional journal, the handbook, and holding a regional conference on the topic. CAEL has expressed an interest in this project and will provide a number of forums (for example, regional and national conferences, special workshops, articles in their newsletter) for dissemination.

- Identify five additional seminar subjects.

- Train five additional seminar instructors.

- Offer five additional theory seminars. All successful theory seminars will be continued as part of the regular Metro U curriculum, and additional seminars will be developed.

Evaluation activities: In order to evaluate the project, the following activities will be undertaken.

- All materials, including video-tapes of seminar sessions, materials used in faculty training and seminar syllabi will be formally reviewed and critiqued by faculty at Metro U. In doing so, they will use the criteria developed to evaluate all course offerings at Metro U. (See Appendix E.)

- At the end of each theory seminar, students will complete evaluation questionnaires which will focus on:

    - students' perceptions of the appropriateness of subject matter for the theory seminar format;

    - the strengths and weaknesses of the seminar; and

    - improvements which might be made.

- After each seminar has been offered, the instructors will meet to discuss the seminars and to recommend any changes. Faculty will work in teams to critique seminars in various disciplines.

- The project directors will follow up on those students who fail to successfully complete the seminars in order to identify reasons for non-completion and make appropriate adjustments in seminar design. Also, attention will be given to developing criteria for identifying types of students most likely to succeed in the theory seminar format.

- The panel of educators from area colleges and from nontraditional institutions throughout the United States will critique project materials and the handbook.

- Data about students participating in the seminars will be collected. The information resulting from these evaluation activities will be used to make improvements in future theory seminars, and will be incorporated into the dissemination materials.

Project directors: The major resource needed to implement this process is release time for two faculty members, Dr. Anne Webb and Dr. Leah Harvey, who will each serve half-time as project directors in the first year and quarter time the second year to coordinate the project, train faculty, be responsible for the long- and short-term outcomes and carry out the evaluation process. The project directors' duties will include:

- working with faculty to identify appropriate areas for theory seminars;

- developing training materials;

- training community faculty in instruction, diagnostic evaluation and assessment;

- coordinating the review of theory seminars, syllabi, materials and evaluation instruments;

- planning, scheduling and coordinating theory seminars;

- writing the seminar handbook;

- carrying out dissemination and evaluation activities; and

- evaluating each theory seminar and theory seminar instructor.

Webb and Harvey are skilled and experienced administrators and assessment faculty. They have been coordinators of the Arts and Sciences and Business/Public Administration Centers, respectively. These are two of five academic divisions within the university, and the coordinator positions are equivalent to those of division heads at more conventional four-year colleges with enrollments of 5,000 to 6,000 students. Webb and Harvey each, with four other resident faculty in the centers, are responsible for coordinating and evaluating the work of more than 100 adjunct faculty members, directing curriculum development, recruiting faculty, and supervising the evaluation of experiential learning.

In the evaluation of students' experiential learning, both Webb and Harvey have trained 70-80 faculty in assessment of experiential learning; developed, with resident and adjunct faculty, assessment workshops using a variety of measurement techniques to evaluate experiential learning; and initiated and supervised the development of evaluation guidelines for experiential learning.

Harvey's training and experience in the evaluation of educational programs provides her with the qualifications for directing the evaluation of the theory seminars. She has planned and conducted evaluation studies of the narrative transcripts and degree programs at Metro U, and evaluated educational programs for the Minneapolis/St. Paul school districts. She has taught faculty in out-state Minnesota, Seattle and Chicago the principles and methods of assessing

experiential learning, thereby gaining wide experience in the training of faculty in the evaluation of students' practical experiences.

Webb's administrative experience includes directing the Volunteer Services Program at Metro U, and participating in securing grants from The Otto Bremer and Dayton Hudson Foundations that established that program. Further, in 1979 Webb coordinated the Self-Study of the Minnesota Historical Society under a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities, and developed and coordinated two Metro U colloquiums that had national attendance.

The combination of skills that Harvey and Webb bring to this project is related uniquely to the activities involved. They have similar administrative experience within the university but in different areas; thus, they bring first hand knowledge of the adjunct faculty and student needs in both the arts and sciences and in business/public administration. Further, when they served together as assessment faculty, they developed assessment materials and processes that are still in use at the university. They also bring complementary strengths - Webb has experience in administering grants, and Harvey has expertise in the evaluation of educational programs. (See Appendix F for complete resumes.)

Contacts with groups and individuals affected by the project: Every group affected by this project has been integral in its development. Students have expressed a need for

a learning option which combines the attributes of both courses and assessment of experiential learning; resident and adjunct faculty have actively participated in the development of a limited number of theory seminars. The entire university community has been involved in discussions relative to theory seminars and actively endorsed their development. A commitment to innovative education such as theory seminars is an important aspect of Metro U's mission.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Short-term outcomes:

- Increased numbers of Metro U students incorporating prior experiential learning in their degree plans.
- Increased quantity and quality in the theoretical components of prior experiential learning included in students' degree programs.
- Theory seminar scheduling models appropriate for specific disciplines.
- Materials and procedures for use in training faculty to develop and teach theory seminars.
- Diagnostic testing processes which can be used in specific disciplines to appropriately direct students to courses, theory seminars or assessment of current knowledge.
- Identification, through diagnostic testing, of those areas in specific disciplines which are usually lacking in knowledge gained from life/work experiences.
- Training sessions for 15 faculty, teaching them to develop and teach theory seminars - identifying the important theoretical components common to all disciplines and specific to particular disciplines and using various teaching and assessment techniques to teach and measure those components.
- Materials to be used by students in theory seminars, including assignments, research or other long term projects, syllabi for seminar sessions, and assessment materials.

- Fifteen theory seminars in areas in which adult students are likely to have acquired significant knowledge through practical and life/work experiences and in which students' knowledge gaps are uniform.

- A handbook, for use at Metro U and other colleges and universities, which outlines procedures for developing theory seminars, model curricula, and the pedogogical theories and methods of training faculty.

- A formative evaluation process using a panel of educators from area colleges and nontraditional institutions throughout the United States to evaluate project materials and the handbook as they are developed.

Long-term outcomes:

- A mechanism for institutions to strengthen the quality of assessment in their experiential learning programs.

- Theory seminar models which can be adapted by other institutions as those institutions attempt to address changing student needs.

- Increased acceptability of experiential learning by those institutions which have been reluctant to recognize such learning as comparable to conventional college level outcomes, leading to increased numbers of institutions recognizing experiential learning.

- Opportunities for adult students at Metro U and other colleges and universities to gain recognition for experience-based learning in a time and cost effective manner.

- At least 10 theory seminars developed as a part of this grant, included in the regular Metro U curriculum.

- New theory seminars as students demand in appropriate areas dictates.

- Continued faculty development in designing and teaching theory seminars.

- An article on theory seminars for a professional journal.

- A regional conference cosponsored by CAEL on theory seminars and the findings of the study supported by this grant and other presentations as appropriate.